

STUDIES IN CHINESE ART AND SOME INDIAN INFLUENCES

*(Lectures delivered in connection with the International
Exhibition of Chinese Art at the Royal Academy of Arts)*

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FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to welcome on behalf of the Royal Academy, as well as myself and indeed of all lovers of Oriental art, the publication of these four important lectures, delivered in London during the memorable exhibition of Chinese art at the Royal Academy in 1935-6.

The four authors are experts of high distinction, who by their support and co-operation contributed greatly to the completeness and international character of that splendid tribute to the Chinese genius for art of many kinds ; and the publication of these special lectures has been made possible by the generous aid of Sir Percival David and Mr. George Eumorfopoulos, both of whom, and particularly the former, also prepared the ground and directed the complex organization of the exhibition—an exhibition, it may be remembered, which was one of great splendour and made a wide appeal, not only to students and connoisseurs, but also to the general public for the enjoyment and instruction which it afforded.

The India Society is to be warmly congratulated on being the effective means of producing a permanent record of these lectures in a form that does them proper honour. The splendour of a great exhibition, though leaving its beneficial influences behind, soon passes from distinct memory as it does from actual sight ; and we are all grateful for such gleams of its light as are kept burning in these pages.

As Professor Pelliot points out in his chapter, our knowledge of the ancient history of China and her arts is still in a state of infancy. There can be no more fruitful method of obtaining light on the vast tracts of the subject that remain still unexplored or uncharted than the comparative method adopted by these four scholars, proceeding from that of which we know

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something to signs of its influence and connections in that of which we know little or nothing.

The Royal Academy and its friends were very happy and proud to see the great international exhibition arranged in its galleries and thronged by the public, and they are very pleased that the Royal Academy can connect its activities with the production of this fine volume.

WILLIAM LLEWELLYN.

CHAPTER I

BUDDHIST ART IN CENTRAL ASIA : INDIAN, IRĀNIAN AND CHINESE INFLUENCES (FROM BĀMIYĀN TO TURFĀN)*

BY J. HACKIN

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THE forms of art which we intend to study on this occasion show in their characteristics a contrast between a singular uniformity in means and a surprising variety of styles, arising from a painstaking adaptation of very limited local resources to the requirements of a complex iconographic scheme. At these halting-stages in Central Asia, where the finer kinds of material are altogether lacking; where stone, when found, is of such coarse texture that only huge statues can be roughly carved in the rock itself, soil combined with wood constitutes the sole resource of the modeller. Reinforced with chopped straw or reeds, horsehair, goat's hair, or camel's wool, and applied in successive coatings to the rock face† or sanctuary walls, it finally forms, when covered with a thin layer of plaster, a perfectly smooth surface on which the painter draws in red ochre the contours and the main lines of his images.

Some architectural rock sculptures fortunately preserved at a certain number of sites are evidently faithful copies of buildings in the open. Rock sculptures and open-air structures are complementary in the sense that the decorative painting in the rock sanctuaries has but partially withstood the repeated iconoclastic efforts of the Muslim invaders, while the buildings in the open, when once abandoned, disappeared, to be preserved beneath the sand drifts.

The characteristics to which we have just referred are met with in a

* Lecture delivered before the India Society on February 27, 1936. Sir Francis Young-husband presided.

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† The first coating, intended to fill in the inequalities of the surface of the rock, may be compared with the *grosso* (*strato-greggio*—rough coating) of the Venetian workers in mosaic.

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portion of Central Asia, as known to geographers, corresponding on the one hand to the region of Bāmiyān and the southern part of ancient Bactria, both of which areas are included within the limits of modern Afghānistān, and on the other hand to Kashgaria, embracing the oases situated at intervals between Kashgar and Turfān (northern route) and Khotan and Lop-nor (southern route). A few less defined tracks winding between the sand dunes of the Takla-Makān connect the northern route with that on the south. A diagonal line from Khotan to Aksu would cover more than 370 miles through a desert zone. For the traveller journeying from Kashgar to An-si cheou, near the junction of the two routes, the distance would not be less than 1,055 miles.

This immense region forms a closed-in basin, literally wedged in between high ranges of mountains: the T'ien-shan ("Celestial Mountains") in the north, the Karakoram and K'un-lun in the south. Communication between it and India is still precarious. Through northern Kashmīr, the Nagar and Hunza States, and over either the Kilik or the Mintaka Pass, the district of Sarīkol is reached, and thence Yarkand (southern route) or Kashgar (northern route). A second route, used by caravans, goes by Leh in Ladākh and over the Karakoram Pass towards Yarkand. A third route, of greater length but comparatively less arduous, leads through part of the kingdom of Afghānistān; by this the traveller goes over the Shibar Pass, and entering the confined upper basin of the Amu-daryā, passes by Bāmiyān, Tāsh-kurgān (Khulm), Khānābād and Faizābād, and through Wakhān and over the Wakhjīr Pass into the Sarīkol district, and so on to Kashgar. From Bāmiyān to Kashgar by this route it is about 995 miles. Turkestdān can also be reached by diverging from Balkh to Samarqand and Tashkend. Still other routes might be mentioned, but the three just referred to represent the principal highways by which Buddhism expanded towards Central Asia and China.

"Kashgaria in the early middle-ages (third to tenth centuries) was a country in which the language was Indo-European, the religion Buddhism, and the civilization Indo-Īrānian" (Grousset). The same description applies to the old kingdom of Bāmiyān. Two Indo-European dialects were spoken in Kashgaria: in the north, Tokharian; in the south, Eastern Īrānian.

The Nestorian heresy had made converts in Kashgaria, and the Uīgur Turks, established at Turfān in the second half of the ninth century, for some time encouraged Manichean proselytism. In Bāmiyān from the first to the eighth century Buddhism of the orthodox canon (*hīnayāna*) held sway. Driven from Bāmiyān from about the beginning of the ninth century, the Buddhist communities succeeded in maintaining themselves in the eastern

parts of Kashgaria up to the end of the tenth century, and perhaps, with precarious rights and only in a few monasteries, during the first years of the eleventh century.

For nearly a thousand years Bāmiyān was one of the important halting-places in Central Asia. Situated midway between Bactria (Balkh) and Puruṣapura (Peshāwar) upon the highway that linked Central Asia with India, caravans halted there to refit after the strenuous exertion involved in crossing the passes of the Hindu-kush mountains. Religious foundations developed rapidly in the Bāmiyān valley, under the impetus given by sovereigns who favoured Buddhism, such as the great Kanishka and his successors (first to third century A.D.). The cliffs of tertiary conglomerate, with their high vertical surfaces, were attacked with the pickaxe, and thousands of caves were excavated and formed into sanctuaries furnished with statues and adorned with paintings.

The Muslim occupation, when these sanctuaries were converted into dwelling places, proved unfortunate; the statues were, with rare exceptions, destroyed, and the decorative painting seriously damaged. The measures taken since 1932 by the Government of Afghānistān at the initiative of the French archæological mission have fortunately put an end to such acts. The two colossal statues (the 53 metre Buddha and the 35 metre Buddha) had for centuries been targets for iconoclasts. The architectonic ornamentation had alone been spared: this was destined to be the starting-point of a systematic study of the site (Missions of A. Foucher, 1922; A. and Y. Godard, 1923; Hackin and Carl, 1930-1935).

The oldest caves, which had fallen in, are situated at the foot of the cliff to the east of the 35 metre Buddha. These sanctuaries of primitive type comprise a square hall, vaulted in the form of a cupola supported upon corner ribs. The cupola, the cornice fillets and the walls of the hall were entirely covered with decorative painting of Bodhisattvas, genii and donors, and of stylized flowers. This decoration served as a background for modelled figures of the Buddha fixed on to slightly protruding aureoles, marking a transition between the decorative surface paintings and the principal image, that of a seated Buddha modelled in high relief. The whole produced the effect of a "unitary" scheme, and gave the impression, by the skilful blending of the resources of painting and modelling, of a strictly hierarchical arrangement of the iconographic types. Such processes are not without affinity with the "illusionist" style of Augustan art. These early aspects of the art of Bāmiyān, architectural details apart, show clearly the influence of the Hellenistic East. The documents discovered in 1930 amidst the ruins near the foot of the eastern part of the cliff date back to the end of the second or

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beginning of the third century of the Christian era. The influence of Sāsānian Irān does not appear before the end of the third century, but shows itself quite distinctly in the fourth and fifth centuries.

Clay mixed with chopped straw formed the ground upon which the painters worked ; the same material reinforced with pieces of wood was used in the mouldings (both low and high relief). Bold colours (lapis lazuli, yellow, red ochre, light green) covered the walls and the reliefs.

Square halls roofed with domes springing from corner ribs that form vaults are found in the group of caves reached by the stairs leading to the head of the 35 metre Buddha (Groups A and B). Each of these groups comprises a sanctuary, a meeting hall and one or more cells. Porches looking out over the cliff serve as windows and ensure ventilation. Some halls are roofed with an ingenious combination of imitation beams cut in the rock, arranged in the form of a corbel-table, a method still practised in certain parts of Asia where the winter is particularly severe (Wakhān, Pāmīr, Nūristān, etc.) ; this system of frame-work construction allows for the provision, at a good height, of an opening that serves the double purpose of window and chimney. The imitation effected at Bāmiyān could not have been responsible for this design of construction ; but this stray example none the less represents an interesting form of ornamentation that is frequently reproduced at Buddhist sites in Turkeṣtān (Kizil, Cikkan-Köl), in China (Tun-huang) and Korea (tombs in the environs of Hei-jō). Another group of caves (C) is interesting on account of the shape of the two principal halls and the unusual size of one of them. These two caves are circular in plan, with domed roofs. The decorative painting on the dome portrayed Buddhas, sheltered beneath a canopy in the shape of a parasol, in the attitude of walking, shown full or three-quarter face and still partially preserved, surrounded by large oval-shaped aureoles. This group has a very pleasing effect, with its air of calmness ; the hands and feet, delineated with infinite care, stand out from the dark background, which is enlivened only in the lower portion by ornamental garlands tied with ribbons, and stylized flowers. Here we have a type of composition frequently found in Chinese Turkeṣtān, especially at Sim-sim. The meeting hall in this group was decorated with painting in which the predominating colour was a lapis lazuli blue ; a Buddha and two attendants were enclosed within arched niches in low relief, each of which was surmounted by a small vase framed by two extended wings, while beneath stretched out the ends of a waving ribbon (Figs. 1, 2). This motif, of classical Sāsānian type, shows the first phase of the modifications that are to terminate in the formation of an Irāno-Buddhist art.

The reversion of Persia to its national traditions (beginning of the third

century, A.D.) and the prestige achieved by the first monarchs of the dynasty explain the triumphant expansion of Sāsānian official art towards the east. At Bāmiyān we also find, mingled with Buddhist subjects, decorative motifs that seem to have been borrowed from the royal mansions of Irān. This first phase does not affect the iconography proper; it is wholly confined to the decoration. Thus we find on the ceiling of the porch D ornamental painting consisting exclusively of stylized motifs borrowed from Sāsānian art: boars' heads, winged horses, pairs of pigeons, with tail to tail but with heads turned face to face, birds with necklaces of pearls in their beaks; all these motifs are within medallions. Some of these classical subjects we find again in Kashmīr (Avantisvāmī temple) (Fig. 3), and in Turkestan (Kizil, Toyuk-Mazār, Astana). In the sanctuary of Group D we notice certain innovations. Instead of decorative painting we find in some parts ornamental mouldings of scrolls of foliage covering the cornice fillets and the surroundings of the trilobate niches, signs of a transition, as yet cautiously begun, towards tendencies that become developed and extended in the rock sanctuaries near the 53 metre Buddha. From this same sanctuary in Group D were recovered some strikingly stylized masks of bearded men, late reflections of the great Achæmenian tradition. The influence of the art of Irān in Sāsānian times spreads from the decorative themes to the iconography; the lunar deity painted at the top of the niche of the 35 metre Buddha can be regarded as quite a classical Sāsānian piece of work. One characteristic detail may be mentioned: the cloak lifted and spread out by a strong gust of wind is significant in this respect (Fig. 4). The odd contrast between the frigid immobility of the deity and the fluttering of the cloak is characteristic of Sāsānian art. The bas-reliefs depicting the investiture of Shāpūr at Naqsh-i-Rajab, and that of Ardeshir II by Hormuzd at Tāq-i-Bostān present an exactly similar treatment of detail. The folding of the cloak clearly visible in the bas-reliefs is rendered in the painting at Bāmiyān by very sinuous red lines. The long bordered tunic worn by the lunar deity at Bāmiyān is a garment of Irānian origin; his weapons recall those of the moon god of Palmyra (Aglibol); the winged horses of the chariot call up Hellenistic memories. To right and left, at the sides of this fine painting, are to be seen two rows of personages—Buddhas, monks and donors; these latter, probably of princely rank, have coiffure and dress clearly inspired by Sāsānian models. This grouping together of the lunar deity and donors is particularly expressive of the progress being made by Irānian influences into the domain of Buddhist iconography. Thus the Irānianization of the ornamentation (first phase—end of third to beginning of fourth century) is followed by the Irānianization of the iconographic composition (second phase—second half of fourth century). From Greco-Buddhist art we pass on to

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Īrāno-Buddhist art. The most perfect expression of these tendencies is found in the beautiful Bodhisattva, probably a Maitreya, portrayed at the top of a niche sheltering a seated Buddha (Group E). A cursory view gives an impression of sumptuous decorative symmetry, the more emphasized by the rigidity of the pose; a prolonged study reveals the human traits: the gravity and fixedness of look, indicative of deep spirituality, evoke comparison with certain figures of Byzantine art, especially that of the Christ Emmanuel.

The direct character of Īrānian influence upon compositions of Buddhist inspiration is easily understood if it be remembered that the extreme limit of the spread of official Sāsānian art lay some eighty miles to the north of Bāmiyān, at Dukhtar-i-Nūshirwān. A niche of very large proportions cut in the cliff there recalls in some details the traditional arrangement of the rock-hewn tombs of the Achæmenian kings at Naqsh-i-Rustam near Persepolis. The only modification made in the execution of the scheme was due to the fact that the poor quality of rock at Dukhtar-i-Nūshirwān interfered with the work of the sculptor, leaving to the painter the task of carrying out the conception in its entirety. The principal character appears in a very damaged condition: a full-face representation of a Sāsānian king or prince seated, with his legs slightly apart, upon a throne formed of the fore-parts of two horses in close juxtaposition. This figure has a head-dress in the form of a lion's head surrounded by two spread wings. From the outer edge of the nimbus rise the heads of eight animals: gazelle, ibex, stag (?), elephant (on the right), lioness, buffalo, stag and elephant (on the left). Attendants are grouped on either side of the prince. Incidents of a royal hunt are depicted on the extreme right: gazelles, ibex and wild sheep are portrayed with great vigour, and with realistic, yet not excessive, animation.

Dukhtar-i-Nūshirwān represents one of the centres of inspiration from the Īrāno-Buddhist art of Bāmiyān. The lunar deity, the donors, the fine Bodhisattva are the most typical examples of that complex art which later on (sixth-seventh centuries) develops into a local style characterized by a great abundance of ornaments (bracelets, necklaces, pendants, reliquary-bags), and the appearance of the diadem with three infixed crescents supporting globes or pearls. This peculiar form of diadem, a local emblem of royalty, adorns the heads alike of Bodhisattvas (Maitreya) and the Buddha, and crowns the parasol canopies.

The decorative painting of the rock-cut sanctuaries becomes changed to ornamentation in the form of mouldings, which is gradually extended over the whole sanctuary, reaching up to the crown of the cupola. This feature of the decoration is specially developed in the sanctuaries alongside the 53 metre Buddha. The cornice-fillets and the arcatures are covered with scrolls

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of foliage; the old Mesopotamian theme of the overflowing vase presents itself in a fresh aspect, Irānianized by the addition of the waving ribbon. Grimacing faces appear, decked with foliate beards and moustaches. The top of the cupola is decorated with a combination of lozenges and hexagons, recalling certain ceilings in the temple of Bacchus at Baalbek (Lyban). Ctesiphon, the Sāsānian capital of Mesopotamia, must have played an important part in the transmission of these motifs.

The relentless pressure of Islām then begins to weigh heavily upon Bāmiyān. The Sāsānians enter upon a struggle against the Arab invaders, the echoes of which unfortunately resound in the peaceful valley (second half of seventh century A.D.). The political prestige of Irān is weakened. The monks of Bāmiyān, becoming opportunist, as human beings are wont, and abandoning their work of modelling, turn towards India and receive new inspiration thence. The art of the Imperial Guptas furnishes themes pervaded by a human grace that contrasts strongly with an iconography impregnated with a lofty and distant dignity.* The vault of the niche sheltering the 53 metre Buddha was covered entirely by graceful themes of Indian inspiration; Bodhisattvas in easy attitudes receive homage from creatures that move about in a misty atmosphere of sensuousness. The nude female, for example, with heavy breasts and attractive figure, does it not recall the graceful forms of Ajanta?

The medallions ornamenting the salients of the niche are partly covered with clay casts; in each there is a group of three genii, all flying in the same manner towards the image of the Buddha. The third medallion on the right shows one of these genii seizing by handfuls the offerings handed to him on a plate by one of his wives, the one on his right, while his other wife, on his left, holds a ring with the tips of her left fingers as if it were precious. Here, as also on the fourth medallion on the left (Fig. 5), the anatomical detail discloses unquestionably the influence of Gupta art, while the waving ribbons and ornaments evoke Irānian memories. These groups of flying beings are allied to the bas-reliefs of Deogaṛh and Bhumarā, and those (post-Gupta) of Aihole. Thus ends on an Indian note, vibrant and sensuous, an art restrained through long centuries by a hierarchical and strict canon. Living apart as he did from the world, the monk of Bāmiyān none the less succumbed to a very human opportunism in art.

Buddhism prospered once more at Bāmiyān at the beginning of the eighth century. This fact is disclosed by certain palæographic peculiarities revealed from the manuscripts discovered in 1930, and by the clear account given by the

* This tendency to change in the iconography may have been due to the presence, noted by Houei-tch'ao, of monks adhering to the Great Vehicle (*mahāyāna*).

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Korean monk Houei-tch'ao, who visited Bāmiyān in 727 A.D. We know nothing about the years preceding the destruction of the Buddhist foundations and the dispersion of the monks, disasters which put an end to the high hopes which a return, full of promise, to the artistic traditions of India might have aroused.

* * * *

There is no doubt that Bāmiyān, which enjoyed great prestige in the Buddhist world, must have been regarded as a model and guide by those craftsmen of Kashgaria who were in a position to communicate directly with the famous valley. We shall see, while studying rapidly the various sites in northern Kashgaria, particularly that of Kizil, that Irānian and Indian influences combined show themselves not only in the direction of the repetition pure and simple of the old themes provided by Bāmiyān, but also in operating constantly to enrich the repertory of illustrations of an episodic character, scenes from the life of the Buddha, illustrations from the Jātakas and didactic stories occupying all available spaces, to such an extent that the images of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are at times pushed away towards the cupola above or to the far end of the sanctuary. In its advance eastwards Irāno-Buddhist art was destined to encounter Chinese art; the Irānian elements were then gradually to disappear, the masterful enterprise of China permitting the retention of iconographic details of secondary importance only, which will be seen to persist, mechanically repeated, in the Buddhist art of Japan.

There is a marked contrast between the sites along the northern highway and those along the southern route. Though the role of Irānian influences may become played out in the south, the eastern Hellenistic influences maintain their place; imported by foreign artists, they disappear, without leaving any appreciable traces, at the beginning of the fourth century A.D. India's contribution is represented by some late productions (end of the Gupta to beginning of the post-Gupta period). We may add that the art of Kashmīr affected by very degenerate Irānian influences seems to have inspired the craftsmen of the Yotkān (Khotan) area.

It was in the course of excavating the ruins of Buddhist sanctuaries erected at Mīrān, to the south of Lop-nor, that Sir Aurel Stein discovered mural paintings, executed in tempera, representing certain episodes in the Jātaka of the benevolent prince (Vessantara Jātaka).^{*} The ground on which the frescoes had been painted, composed of friable clay mixed with chopped reeds, covered the wall of a round hall, the cupola of which had perished; in the middle of the hall was a *stūpa* built upon a circular base. The very edifying story of the benevolent prince was thus unfolded before the eyes of

^{*} See F. H. Andrews, *Indian Art and Letters*, Vol. VIII., No. 1.

the faithful who performed the rite of circumambulating the *stūpa*. Beneath this composition are seen children carrying a garland, some of whom wear only a loin-cloth, while others are fully dressed and wear Phrygian caps. Between every two of the children is the bust of a personage covering the space left free by the loop of the garland. There is nothing very novel in such a composition; the sculptors of the Greco-Buddhist school—in the schists of Gandhāra and the soft limestone of Haddā—repeat this theme to satiety. The most perfect examples come from the workshops of Haddā, more particularly the *amorini*, which are still more like the Hellenistic mouldings of the region of Antioch. At Mirān the tone is more Oriental; the busts, whether we consider that of the rather vulgarly attractive musician, or that of the bearded man, emphasize these tendencies. The bearded man with his thick black wig recalls certain characters in the story of Esther, reproduced on one of the walls of the synagogue of Dura (beginning of the second half of the third century A.D.) and attributed to "the Irānian painter." The characters represented at Mirān are not, moreover, free from a slight touch of Irānian influence. Sir Aurel Stein thinks that the author of these paintings, a certain Titus by name, might have been "a sort of Roman Eurasian, largely Oriental by blood but brought up in Hellenistic traditions . . . whom his calling had carried, no doubt through the regions of Eastern Irān impregnated with Buddhism, to the very confines of China."* It is possible that the head of this studio may have superintended the preparation of a complete scheme, combining both painting and sculpture, for the gigantic statues of Mirān, as well as those of Niya (between Khotan and Mirān), and some finds at Yotkān (fragments of decorated pottery) must also be included among the works attesting Hellenistic influences. The heads of the statues found at Rawak (north-east of Khotan) are of Mongoloid appearance. These intrusions of Oriental Hellenism into the Buddhist domain stopped suddenly in the early years of the fourth century. The monasteries along the southern route will henceforth show only Indian influences. The elegant Gupta art, so full of harmony, gradually inspires the adoption of its models; this does not result in masterpieces comparable with the Buddhas of Mathurā, which have yet to be found, whether at Dandān-oīlik or at Ak-terek, but in modest reflections of the great Gupta art. The moulded and modelled pieces preserve the typical suppleness of anatomical detail and polish of contour, while the Buddhas, draped in monastic cloaks with deep folds, often retain traces of rude colouring. It has now been established that Gupta models of the Mathurā school reached the monasteries on the southern route by way of Gilgit (northern Kashmīr). Some small ex-votos, as well as a number of

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manuscripts, were found by chance in the immediate vicinity of Gilgit in 1931. Further north, in the Nagar State, Colonel R. C. F. Schomberg discovered the ruins of a *stūpa*. These recent finds show very clearly that the Buddhist missionaries were not content simply to use this difficult route, but they had staked it out with pious foundations, and had spread their doctrine among the neighbouring peoples. The small statuettes found at Gilgit represent Buddhas of pure Gupta type and of distinctively Indian grace. This is the type we find again, rendered somewhat clumsily—was not mass production by means of moulds rife in the monasteries?—at Ak-terek and at Dandān-oilik. The last-named site has fortunately provided for us—in contrast with the mediocre specimens we have just referred to—some paintings of rare quality on wooden panels. The *nāgī* of Dandān-oilik (end of eighth century; see Grousset, *Civilisations de l'Orient*, III., Fig. 114) of a somewhat affected grace but of elegant figure, complies with the requirements of the canon of proportions observed in the Gupta workshops in India. We should notice, however, that the execution of certain anatomical details betrays a tendency to schematism (*e.g.*, in indicating the patella by an oval). Later on (eighth to ninth centuries) we notice the influence of the art of Kashmīr. It seems quite probable that the Mahāyānist Buddhism then flourishing at Khotan (see in this connection the account of the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, Hsuan-tsang) may quite readily have accepted contributions from Śaivism. Certain paintings coming from Dandān-oilik near Khotan must clearly be labelled as showing late Indian influence. The Irānian influences, which may be detected here and there, are not due to direct contact, but seem to be blended with the Kashmīrian elements, of which the temple of Avantisvāmī near Śrīnagar (ninth century A.D.) furnishes some examples. Again, it is the influence of Kashmīr that we find very marked in certain statuettes from Khotan representing *apsaras* bearing garlands of large pearls. A bas-relief on the Avantisvāmī temple shows an identical detail (Fig. 6, upper left portion). The latest phases of the Buddhist art of southern Kashgaria (ninth to tenth century) thus borrows its essential characteristics from India through the medium of the art of Kashmīr.

BUDDHIST ART IN NORTHERN KASHGARIA.—Of the numerous sites revealed by the patient labour of European and Japanese archæologists I shall only refer to those which have the most direct bearing on our subject: Tumshuk, Kizil, Kumtura, Shōrchuk, Bezeklik and Murtuk, “witness-sanctuaries,” so to speak, that mark stages in the progress of Buddhism towards the east, a study of which will enable us to note the changing phases of an “art in motion.”

Tumshuk.—Tumshuk may be classed as still revealing Hellenistic

influences ; a mere glance at the clay statuettes brought thence by M. Paul Pelliot is convincing in this respect ; the objects recovered from Tumshuk now deposited in the Musée Guimet (Pelliot Hall), in fact, carry on the tradition of the coroplasts of Taxila (North-West India) and Haḍḍā (Afghānistān). The heads of the statues from the same site to be seen in the Louvre museum leave the same impression ; but the torsos of Bodhisattvas are of pronouncedly Indian (Gupta) elegance. We find ourselves here—of this there can be no doubt—at one of the significant stages of the Greco-Indian compromise ; and it is the canons of art here exemplified that we shall find adopted by the sculptors of T'ien-long-chan (China). At Tumshuk the women's costumes show very marked local influences.

Kizil and Kumtura.—Kizil (near Kuchā) and the neighbouring Kumtura (13 miles south-east of Kizil) are sites of considerable importance. The *ming-öi* (" 1,000 caves ") at Kizil contain very interesting rock sculptures, repeating types already met at Bāmiyān : square dome-roofed halls, decorated with imitation beams arranged in corbel fashion ; and some of the caves have cylindrical vaults. A good number of the sanctuaries are provided with an ambulatory excavated behind the statue, which stands with its back towards the back wall of the square hall (cave of the pigeons carrying rings, also called the Pelliot cave) : this arrangement enabled the faithful to perform the ceremony of circumambulation (*pradakṣiṇā*). The decorative painting of the caves reveals, as at Bāmiyān, direct intervention of Sāsānian motifs ; we see, for example, ducks carrying in their beaks necklaces of pearls (now in the Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin, and the Musée de l'Ermitage, Leningrad). We may note, besides, that farther east, at Toyuk-mazār, are found heads of wild boars, even more stylized than at Bāmiyān (Serge d'Oldenbourg and Grünwedel—von le Coq missions). It may be added that the same motif is found on a piece of fabric recovered from a burial ground at Astana near Turfān (Stein mission). The oldest paintings in the sanctuaries near Kizil, in the so-called cave of the painter, must date from about the beginning of the second half of the fifth century A.D. (inscription in a Turkestan variety of archaic Brāhmī). At any rate, the intervention of Sāsānian influences, a factor which has to be taken into account as well as that of the dating, cannot have occurred in this remote part of Asia earlier than the second half of the fourth century A.D.

From the iconographic point of view Kizil is characterized by a marked taste for the representation of episodes ; scenes from the life of the Buddha and scenes from the Jātakas cover the walls of the rock sanctuaries. Processions of donors also appear ; the men, robed in long tunics, with lapels, armed with sword and dagger, appear to move cautiously upon tiptoe. Details in the dress

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and arms disclose undoubted Irānian influences. The women wear tightly fitting corsets and small, short jackets, the breasts being considerably exposed.

Two stylistic features, rather strongly contrasted, are noticeable at Kizil (see Waldschmidt). The first (Style No. 1, second half of the fifth century to the end of the first half of the seventh century) tries to give the appearance of mouldings to the representations of bodies by a judicious use of shading, the effect of which is increased by the more or less thick brush lines delineating the outer contours. The colouring, which is quiet and unobtrusive, in grey, bistre, reddish-brown and dark brown, has only one picturesque tone—a bright green, sparingly used withal, but producing the happiest effect. Sāsānian influences still show themselves, but very shyly, so to speak (so-called cave of the painter; cave of the peacocks). Indian influences, on the contrary, are very marked. The masterpiece at Kizil, in my opinion, is the magnificent composition representing the dance of Queen Candraprabhā (the treasure cave, now in the Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin). The perfectly balanced grouping of the characters, the elegance of form, the restrained sensuousness and the exceptional character of the light that bathes these undraped figures—all these elements, harmoniously combined, give the observer an impression of human and very restful serenity.

Style No. 2 stresses tendencies that are merely decorative and superficial (see Fig. 7, Pelliot Mission, from Subashi). The semblance of moulding gradually disappears; the contours are shown by lines of one thickness; the feelings of the characters are frequently expressed by grimaces. New colours appear—a brilliant lapis lazuli blue and a green less subdued than that used in Style No. 1. These tendencies become even more accentuated in a still later variety (end of seventh century) of Style No. 2: the attitudes become schematized; an absence of imagination is shown in the composition of episodic scenes; certain details are overlooked—so many precursory signs of a decadence which becomes more and more pronounced from the beginning of the eighth century A.D. The share taken by Sāsānian influences in the formation of Style No. 2 seems to have been considerable, as evidenced by the waving fillets, details of dress, and the taste for symmetrical arrangement. Though they show a rather marked set-back, Indian influences are still very perceptible. By the peculiarity of the colouring employed, by a certain pretentiousness and by a stiffness emphasized by the too precise and too cursive contours, this Style No. 2 of Kizil and Subashi presents an originality which too easily breaks down. The numerous documents brought from Kizil and Kumtura to Berlin (Museum für Völkerkunde) by the Grünwedel-von le Coq missions provide the visitor with a choice of works that illustrate in a special manner the art of Kizil.

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At Kumtura, where Irānian influences show a slight decline, new tendencies make their appearance. Certain compositions, especially one of the death (*parinirvāṇa*) of the Buddha, reveal purely Chinese details. Elsewhere *apsarases* in full flight are represented surrounded by stylized clouds, their long waving scarves leaving a coloured wake behind them. Here we have a classical motif of Chinese art—T'ang art. At Shōrchuk and Bezeklik we shall find these compositions in Chinese style in increasing number and size. Painting always goes ahead of modelling or moulding in this respect; reproduced by mechanical process, statues represent the unchanging elements in decorative work.

Shōrchuk.—We find them in such stereotyped form in the monasteries of Shōrchuk, situated about midway between Kizil and Turfān. In the sanctuaries built in the open, the high-reliefs—fragile pieces strengthened by an admixture of reeds—bear evidence of Gupta influence, which is emphasized by the very schematized appearance of the drapery. Moulds found in fairly large numbers during the excavations carried out by the Serge d'Oldenbourg mission leave no doubt as to the technical procedure followed at Shōrchuk. Some mural paintings were also brought to light (Temple K 9/c). Strongly influenced by China, these show (group of monks in the Musée de l'Ermitage, Leningrad) very interesting peculiarities in technique. The fixing solution used gives to the colours a density and depth that contrasts with the lively and soft tints of Kizil. The paintings in the rock sanctuaries at Kizil show compositions that are very Chinese in appearance, scrolls of foliage, elegantly treated, closely resembling the goldsmiths' work of the T'ang period (seventh and eighth centuries); some Buddhist divinities presage the excessive gesticulation of the Japanese Foudō; while here and there we notice unobtrusive reminiscences of Irānian art.

Bezeklik and Murtuk.—At the Bezeklik site, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the village of Murtuk, there are remains of structures in the open as well as rock sanctuaries. The decorative painting in the sanctuaries shows signs of Chinese influences; we shall therefore draw attention to only a very few Irānian or Indian elements. On the dome of Temple 3 we see a deity wearing a cuirass of very characteristic type, very similar in appearance to the armour worn by the Irānian knights of Kizil and Kumtura—a detail to be remembered: the name of this Irānian-looking deity is given in Chinese. In a rock sanctuary (No. 27) we see a representation of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, the elegant form of which is very Indian. The dome of Temple 3 is covered with tantrik themes, which indicate the advent of late Indian influences. All the iconographic details in the other rock sanctuaries confirm the triumph of Chinese influences.

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The site near Murtuk is on the whole of very different character; the influences noticeable are shared between Iran and India. The decorative painting in the Murtuk rock sanctuaries was doubtless due to the direct initiative of the knights portrayed over the entrance to one of the caves. These persons, who are kneeling with hands joined, are dressed in armour like that worn by the warriors of Kizil (scene depicting the division of the relics of the Buddha). One donor, on the extreme left of the upper row, wears a helmet ornamented with spread wings (Cave 3), a detail that shows very clear Sāsānian influence. On the opposite wall a consecration ceremony is depicted. An emaciated, skeleton-like person, clothed simply with a loin cloth, kneels at the feet of a Buddha who is seated in European fashion; a Bodhisattva, who is standing, is pouring water from a ewer over the left hand of the Buddha and over the head of the devotee. This Bodhisattva and the person kneeling behind him (see Fig. 8) differ in no respect from the Indian tradition. The composition as a whole discloses undoubted skill in the matter of design, but the colours are poor and the tints harsh. In a neighbouring cave (No. 4) the scrolls of foliage are treated more freely, and the colouring is richer; the characters surrounded by floral decoration have been drawn with a suppleness that evokes reminiscences of Gupta art. It is striking to observe how very strongly Indian influences are displayed in this forgotten sanctuary in eastern Kashgaria, in surroundings so favourable to the development of influences from China, which lay close by.



FIG. 1. TĀMIVĀN. THE TĀMIVĀN

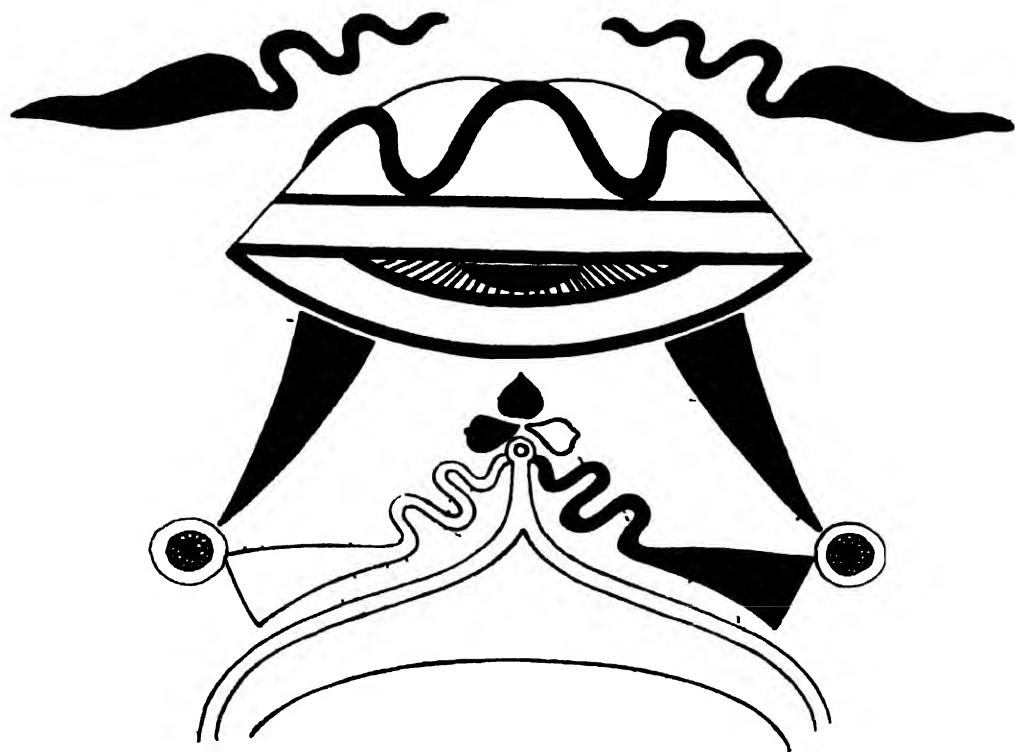


FIG. 2. KIZIL, TO BE COMPARED WITH TĀMIVĀN

From Grünwaldt: *II. But the tis he Kuns stett* (Fig. 1)



FIG. 30. TASHIRHI AVANTH VĀMI
Th. 1. Melum Hek'n

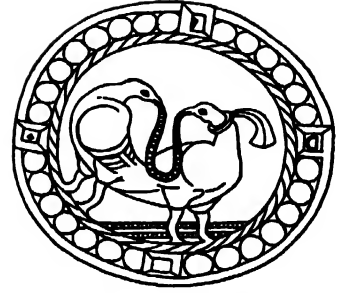


FIG. 31. JĀMIYAN



FIG. 32. TUNAT LITIA OVER THE NIGHT OF THE 35 MITER BUDDHA



FIG. 5.—VALLABHA, ENAMENTS, A. MUSEE L'ÉCOLE NIGRE, L'ÉCOLE 5. MUSEE L'ÉCOLE
THE HICK COLUM



FIG. 6.—KASHMIR, AVANTISVAMI, BA. L'ÉCOLE
Photo: Madame Hickin



THE VENKATESWARA DEITY
IN THE CAVE PAINTING

PLATE IV



THE ST. MICHAEL'S CATHEDRAL

The St. Michael's Cathedral, Central Asia

CHAPTER II

INDIAN AND OTHER INFLUENCES IN CHINESE SCULPTURE*

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I

THE beginnings of sculptural art in China may nowadays be carried as far back as 1,000 or 1,200 years B.C. The excavations on the Yin strata at Anyang have yielded not only considerable fragments of carved vessels in stone or bone, decorated with conventionalized zoomorphic motifs, but also some carvings in the round representing birds, animals and a squatting human figure. They are all closely connected in style and significance with the contemporary bronze art, and a search into their artistic origin would involve a discussion of the whole Shang-Yin culture, which is more than can be attempted in this connection. The same artistic tradition, though modified by approach to nature, may still be observed in some of the small bronze statuettes representing kneeling men which evidently have served as torch-bearers in the tombs. A number of them, which are now in the Royal Ontario Museum, are said to have come from the tombs at Old Loyang, which also contained the Piao bells (presumably of the middle of the sixth century B.C.).¹ Their general characteristics, as, for instance, the undifferentiated block-like form and the broad and rugged type with large round eyes, connect them with the artistic products of the preceding epoch, but the treatment of certain details of the costumes; the modelling of the feet, etc., reveal a more intimate observation of nature. They form, so to speak, the links between the Yin-Chou sculptures and those of the Han period (Fig. 1). They retain some of the essential characteristics of the earlier works, though in a modified form. Consequently one may well discover in these statuettes a general resemblance to certain products of Central American art, a kind of parallelism which points towards a

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similar artistic disposition or a common origin, rather than to any direct influence or intercommunication between these art centres so widely separated in time and space. Whatever explanation may be offered of this correspondence, it must be admitted that the sculptural products of the Yin-Chou art reflect traditions of style which are no longer to be found in those of the Han dynasties.

The whole orientation of Chinese art seems to change at the beginning of the Han period. This was of course closely connected with important changes in the general cultural conditions of the country ; in the field of art it was supported by a growing interest in objective nature and a closer dependence on West Asiatic sources of inspiration. This does not mean that the earlier Chinese traditions of style were abandoned or forgotten—quite the contrary : the evolution of Chinese art remains an unbroken current all through the ages, always reflecting a definite indigenous genius—but it is modified from time to time by influences from abroad, and by a more or less intimate approach to actual life. The latter becomes evident particularly in painting and in the minor plastic representations in clay and bronze of animals and human beings made for the tombs, while the foreign influences are perhaps more apparent in the large stone monuments. Consequently we are here mainly concerned with the latter, which by the force of circumstances also are less known.

Most of these animal sculptures represent lions or winged feline beasts which were placed as guardians at the gateways leading into large tomb areas. In later times they were also used at the palace gates, but during the early epochs the tombs were evidently considered as more permanent abodes than the palaces and built in a more solid fashion. The best known examples, still at their original place, are the lions at the tomb of the Wu family near Chia-hsiang in Shantung, erected about A.D. 147 (according to the inscription on one of the pillars). When I visited the place (1922) one of the two animals was almost buried in a mud pool, but the other was visible, though lying with broken legs at the side of the pedestal (Fig. 2). The sculptural beauty and expressiveness of this proud animal depend primarily on the contrast between the supple curving body and the immense neck, which is carried so far forward into the head that it almost seems to continue directly into the wide-open jaws. The wings on the shoulders may still be discovered, and also the short ornamental mane which forms a wreath around the head.

A larger and possibly somewhat earlier example of the same lion-type is the monumental statue now in the possession of Mr. Edgar Worch. Here the curve of the body is less accentuated, but the enormous neck with the short mane is the same as in the Wu lion, and one may also discover traces of wings at the shoulders modelled in very low relief. The legs are broken, but the

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movement in the loins and the shoulders makes it evident that the animal was striding forward with long steps (Fig. 3). There is a suggestion of muscular tension and fierce bestial energy which finds its final expression in the very sensitive modelling of the opened jaws. The sculptor has succeeded in infusing life into this huge animal form, at the same time preserving its block-like massivity and grandeur. A definite date is difficult to indicate, but the sculptural treatment suggests a somewhat earlier stage in the evolution of style than is illustrated by the lions at the Wu tomb.

A third example of the same lion-type, though differently applied, is the monument in the Okura Museum in Tokyo (now repaired after disastrous damages in the earthquake of 1923). It is said to come from the T'ung Ch'iao t'ai of Ts'ao Ts'ao, which would date it about 210 (Fig. 4). The hind part of this seated lion has served as plinth for a pillar, but the forelegs, the bulging chest and neck ending in a short muzzle are completely rendered according to the same standard as in the previous examples. The stylization of the muscles on the legs, the wings on the shoulders, and the mane is, however, more emphasized, which indicates the somewhat later date.

These early lion-sculptures of the Chinese are evidently not based on studies from nature; such animals did not exist in China except for single specimens sent occasionally as tributes from Western countries to the emperor. The rather free artistic interpretation of the motif must be the result of foreign influences grafted on the stock of indigenous stylistic traditions. But if we direct our attention to the magnificent lion sculptures from Nimrod and Nineveh, from Babylon and Persepolis, we find very little or no correspondence in style with the early Chinese works. These Assyrian and Babylonian lions are more naturalistic representations of the kingly beasts; their artistic significance depends on a conception which seems rather different from that of the Chinese in the Han period. This lion type, which in Nineveh and Babylon becomes so closely associated with the gryphon, may eventually have influenced the Chinese through intermediaries (as will be pointed out below), but this influence does not seem to have been taken up by the Chinese until after the Han period.

The Chinese lion sculptures which have been mentioned above and which may be classified in the Han period show a closer stylistic correspondence with the animal sculptures made at a somewhat earlier period in the Hittite or Aramenian empire, of which quite a number have been preserved, some still in their original positions, such as the monumental beasts which stand out with their fore-parts from the Cyclopean gate-pillars at Boghaz-kuei,⁸ others transported into museums or elsewhere: a whole row of characteristic specimens from Sinjerli are now in Berlin, while one of the finest examples of the same

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group stands in the ruins of old Babylon, whither it may have been transported by Nebuchadnezzar (601-561), who took a great interest in old art.⁸ The sculptures at the lion-gate in Boghaz-kuei are usually dated to the thirteenth century B.C., while the sculptures from Sinjerli are approximately dated to the tenth century, and the great statue in Babylon may be still later, though it was certainly made before the time of Nebuchadnezzar, and most likely at some place farther north, whence it was transported to the site where it still stands (Fig. 9).

The sculptural style of all these animals is quite different from that of the somewhat later Assyro-Babylonian lions; they are heavy and block-like with very short neck and legs; they impose by their mass rather than by any mobility or naturalistic expression. Some of the Sinjerli lions which are executed in high relief appear more like huge metal plaques than as free standing sculptures, and it is interesting to note how closely they correspond in style—*mutatis mutandis*—with some of those small ornamental bronze plaques representing lions or tigers which have been excavated at the north-western border of China and which usually are attributed to the nomadic tribes that lived there long before the Han period (Fig. 7). It seems as if these nomadic tribes, such as the Hsiung-nu, had taken up and continued stylistic traditions which had their root in old Hittite art, and carried it over to the Far East. It forms what might be called the northern current which seems to have reached China already in the sixth or fifth century B.C., if we may judge by the ornamental bronze plaques representing animals which have been excavated at the Chinese borderlands. And there may indeed also have existed larger monuments, in stone, in a similar style before the Han period, though they have been lost. The Han sculptures in stone retain the same characteristics of style in a more or less modified form. This correspondence may be realized if we compare the gate-lion from Ts'ao Ts'ao's palace (now in the Okura Museum) with the monoliths at Boghaz-kuei, or Mr. Worch's lion statue with the still more block-like and imposing monument at Babylon, which represents the lion standing over a fallen man who lies on his back under the belly of the animal reaching up with one arm in defence. It is executed in broad planes with slight definition of detail (like all the statues of so-called Hittite origin) producing almost the impression of unfinished work (or has it been worked over later?).

In the minor bronze plaques mentioned above we often find the lion or the tiger standing in a similar attitude over its prey, though this is not a human being but an animal, and in China there is a well-known monument, erected at the tomb of General Ho Chü-ping (d. 117 B.C.), composed of a horse standing over a fallen warrior (Fig. 10). The correspondence is not of the kind

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that would make us suppose a connection between the monument in China and in Babylon, yet the former may be one of the many results of the gradual infiltration into China of stylistic traditions which, as pointed out above, had their ultimate source in the art which first was formed in the land of the Hittites.

But beside this northern current, which probably was transmitted to China through the intermediary of the nomadic tribes, there was evidently a more southern current of stylistic influences which had its source in the art of the Assyrians and Babylonians. It passed through many transformations under its way across Asia and reached China comparatively late, apparently only towards the end of the Han period, and in a somewhat diluted form. It may here be recalled how the Achæmenians in Persia transformed the Assyrian animal representations by making them more fantastic and schematic.⁴ They combined the zoöomorphic forms with decorative symbolic features, adding wings to the lions and bulls and composing fabulous beasts with feline body, dragon heads, feathers and claws known as gryphons or chimæras, and these became evidently popular all over Asia. They reached China through the intermediary of the Bactrians.

Most illuminating in this respect is the bronze statuette from the Oxus Treasure in the British Museum, which is said to be a Bactrian work of the fourth century B.C. It shows a somewhat Hellenized transformation of the Achæmenian gryphon, more elegant and subtle than the wild beasts from Susa, though composed according to the same pattern.⁵ The body is slim, the legs very strong, the wings are composed of curving feathers, the horned head is borrowed from a dragon (Fig. 11). The same animal type, further conventionalized and more coarsely executed, may be seen in some lozenge-shaped clay reliefs which formed part of the ceiling in one of the cave-temples at Bamiyan and now are divided between the Musée Guimet in Paris and the museum in Kabul.⁶ The body and neck of the gryphon have here been arbitrarily elongated in proportion to the small head, but the animal is still recognizable. The motif must, indeed, have belonged to the most popular in Bactrian and Indo-Scythian art, as it survived even in Buddhist monuments which are hardly earlier than the third century A.D. From here the winged gryphons were transmitted further east to China, where they exercised a decisive influence on sculptural art, in bronze as well as in stone, from the third to the sixth century.

The earliest among the Chinese sculptures representing such animals on a large scale are found in the westernmost part of the country—*i.e.*, in Szechuan (*viz.*, the so-called winged tigers at the tomb of Kao I., not far from Ya-chou fu, and the other similar pair by the tomb of Fan Min, in the same

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region). They have been published by Ségalen and Lartigue, and we are informed that the inscription on the stela by Kao I.'s tomb yields the date A.D. 209 (Fig. 12).⁷ All these animals are characterized by their long curving bodies, lifted by the enormous hind-legs, while the bulging chest and broad neck seem to weigh down on the shorter fore-legs. The wings at the shoulders and the hair-tufts at the ears are composed of stiff curving feathers.

The same features are still better observable in the two statues belonging to Messrs. C. T. Loo and Co. and now exhibited in the Kansas City Museum (Fig. 13, *a-b*). They have the same long and supple bodies rising over the hips, the same gait and bearing as the animals by Kao I.'s tomb, but the ornamental wings and feathers are still more accentuated, and their heads are drawn out into real dragon jaws. They have apparently also had horns and standing ears like the Bactrian statuette, but these are now missing. The long beard which the Chinese sculptor has added may have been introduced as a practical device for strengthening the far-projecting lower jaw.

The same type of animal was also represented in minor bronzes, as may be seen in a fairly large statuette belonging to M. Stoclet, which evidently has served as a foot for a lamp or an incense-burner (Fig. 16). To enumerate all the bronze and clay statuettes which might be grouped around these sculptures would, however, carry us too far. We must limit ourselves to the larger examples in stone, which serve to illustrate the gradual development and transformation of the West Asiatic gryphon or chimæra in accordance with Chinese traditions of style.

If the earliest examples were found in Szechuan, the somewhat later statues of a similar kind seem to have been found in Honan (though none of them is nowadays at its original place), and the most recent ones are still to be seen in Kiangsu. This gradual movement from the West towards the East is also indicative of their way into China. An early example of the Honan group is the somewhat dilapidated statue which was acquired more than fifteen years ago by M. Grosjean at Loyang, where it had been lying abandoned and despised for a long time (Fig. 14). It used to stand in his courtyard in Peking, but I have no idea where its peregrinations have ended. The legs and the forepart of the head are missing, but the body with the long ornamental hair-tufts and wings is well preserved, and on the head may still be observed stumps of the ears and the large flaps of the dragon jaws. It is made according to the same model as the winged animals from Szechuan, but the body is a little shorter, the proportions between the torso and the neck are better, and the modelling is finer.

Another example of approximately the same stage in the evolution of this fabulous animal motif in Chinese art is exhibited in the National Museum in

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Stockholm (Fig. 15). The body is here rendered with great energy and sense for sculptural quality, but the neck is somewhat heavier than in the preceding example, and the dragon jaws are enormous in proportion to the rest of the animal; the horn has become a dented crest over the head—all features which are gradually more and more accentuated in the succeeding chimæras.

The next step in the characteristically Chinese transformation of the West Asiatic gryphon or chimæra may be observed in the statue belonging to Messrs. C. T. Loo and Co. now in the London Exhibition (1936), and the two larger statues of a quite similar type belonging to the University Museum in Philadelphia. They are all said to come from Nei Ch'iu hsien near Shun-tê fu in Honan. In these statues the sculptural treatment has been considerably modified (Fig. 17). The body has become slim, almost serpent-like, and the neck has swollen out enormously, yet it seems weighed down or compressed by the gigantic head with the broad muzzle and thick wavy skin-flaps at the eyes and the ears. The crest over the head adds to the grotesque *terribilità* of the head. The sculptor has used every means to increase the impression of bestial fury, nervous tension and agility. By the linear stylization of the muscles of the neck and the belly the whole animal seems transformed into a bundle of rhythmic curves, developing into bold ornamental patterns in the shoulder-wings and the hair-tufts along the spine.

The same observations fit just as well the two magnificent statues in the Philadelphia University Museum, which are superior not only in size but also by the suggestion of a swift passing movement (Fig. 18). Although their legs are broken, it seems evident that the animals were represented as striding forward with long elastic steps. None of these animals is dated, but to judge by the earlier and later dated representations, they may be from the end of the fifth century, if not later.

The distance in stylistic evolution from the above-mentioned sculptures to the huge chimæras at the tombs of certain emperors of the Sung (420-478), Ch'i (479-501) and Liang (502-536) dynasties is not very long, though the latter are executed on a much larger scale and are far more impressive, as they stand in the fields at their original places in the neighbourhood of Nanking and of Tan-yang, in Kiangsu.⁸ They may without exaggeration be placed among the most significant examples of Chinese sculpture still existing, and would indeed merit a more detailed description than we can give of them in this connection. Our task is simply to illustrate the final Chinese transformation of a motif which had its roots in Achæmenian art and was transmitted to China by the Bactrians or other people in the same region.

The earliest is the chimæra by the tomb of the emperor Sung Wên Ti (d. 453) not far from Chi-lin Mên of Nanking (Fig. 19). It has lost the

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upper part of the head and is now partly covered by a scrap-heap, but the general structure of the animal, the long ornamental beard and the scales, feathers and wings on the massive body can be seen. Better preserved is the proud animal by the tomb of the emperor Ch'i Wu Ti (*d.* 493) at some 30 li distance from Tan-yang (Fig. 20). The dragon head is lifted high on the tall curving neck, the body is thinner, rounder and carried by powerful legs. The wings at the shoulders, the beard and the tufts of hair are treated in the same ornamental fashion as in the previous example. It is a kingly beast still holding its place against evil influences, though its counterpart has vanished without a trace.

Close by are the tombs of the emperor Liang Wu Ti and of his father Hsiao Shun-chê. At the latter tomb, which probably was arranged about 505, the general disposition, with columns and memorial tablets carried by dragons and tortoises, may still be seen, but the chimæras have been turned over and are sleeping in the grass like fallen giants (Fig. 21). Emperor Liang Wu Ti died in 549, and of the two magnificent animals which guarded the entrance to his tomb-area, one is still upright, though it has lost one of its legs (Fig. 22). The animal has become stouter, the body is somewhat larger in proportion to the neck, the chest as well as the loins are bulging and weighing heavily on the short legs. It seems as if the artist had tried to surpass the earlier representations in monumental grandeur and thereby missed something of the agility and energy which characterize the preceding statues. The uncommonly rich ornamentation does not make up for these wants. It is, as far as I know, the last of the great chimæras.⁹

All the later tomb guardians are winged lions, which reveal a different conception, a return to earlier Chinese traditions modified by the foreign influences that we have been following through a row of monuments. From an artistic point of view the winged lions are certainly not inferior to the chimæras—some of them are indeed monuments of great sculptural beauty and significance—but their connection with West Asiatic models is more remote, and we have consequently no reason to dwell on them in this connection (Fig. 23).

II

If we turn from the animal sculptures of China to those which represent Buddhist motifs, we come into an entirely different world. The models or sources of inspiration for these were indeed of Indian origin, but before the models reached China they had to pass through intermediary regions where they were more or less modified in accordance with local traditions. The distance between the homeland of Buddhism and the Middle Kingdom was

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long, and the journey was difficult. The travellers had to choose between the southern sea-route along the Indo-Chinese coast and the northern caravan-routes across the Gobi Desert and Central Asia, and as Buddhist art had taken root in these countries earlier than in China, it is natural that it sometimes reached China in a form which was no longer purely Indian. The fundamental conceptions and iconographic formulæ remained the same, but their artistic interpretation varied considerably in the different countries, depending on the creative faculty and philosophical knowledge of the respective people. The Chinese seem, on the whole, to have been less interested in the iconographic meaning of Buddhist imagery than in its artistic formulation.

We know very little about the earliest beginnings of Buddhist art in China. According to a statement in the Annals of the Eastern Han dynasty, Buddhist sculptures were made already at the beginning of the third century when the emperor Hsien Ti (190-220) ordered the erection of some temples and their decoration with gilded statues,¹⁰ but no such early works have been preserved. The earliest dated examples of Buddhist sculpture known at present are some bronze statuettes of the years 429, 437, 444 and 451, besides two or three somewhat larger stelæ in stone dated in the years 457, 460 and 466. Some of the still existing sculptures in the Yün-kang caves may also have been executed about 460 or shortly after.

The earliest of these bronze statuettes, representing a Buddha seated in the *dhyānī mudrā* on the lion throne, is dated in the second year of the Shêng Kuang reign of the Hsia (or Ho-lien-po) dynasty (corresponding to A.D. 429), and as this family reigned over a rather small kingdom in North-Western Shansi and Kansu, we may presume that the statuette was made in those vicinities.¹¹ The type is rather unlike that of most of the Buddhas dated with *nien haos* of the Northern Wei dynasty and of the Yün-kang sculptures, and seems to reflect a different origin (Fig. 24).

The closest correspondence to this figure that I have been able to find is a stucco-relief of a seated Buddha brought back from Ak-terek (in the Khotan region) by Sir Aurel Stein and reproduced on Plate VIII. in *Serindia* (Fig. 25). The characteristic features of the full oval faces of these two figures are practically the same; the construction of the eyes, nose and mouth is similar, though the execution in clay is somewhat softer and rounder. The mantles are also draped in the same fashion with the aid of a collar-like piece around the neck and shoulders, even though the folds are more summarily treated in the much smaller bronze statuette. It is well known from historical records that Buddhist missionaries came from Khotan to Kansu and Shensi, and they may well have brought certain artistic impulses to the Hsia kingdom.

Similar models seem, however, to have found their way also further

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south. The two statuettes which are dated with *nien hao*s of the Liu Sung dynasty (corresponding to 437 and 451), which reigned in Nanking, follow the same type with slight variations (one of them used to be in the Tuan Fang collection,¹² the other is now in the Freer Gallery—Fig. 27). Both represent Buddhas seated in *dhyānī mudrā* in front of a large leaf-shaped halo. The later one, which is dated in the twenty-eighth year of Yüan Chia of Sung (451), reminds us, both by its type and the arrangement of the mantle, of the Buddha from the Hsia country. The two statuettes are evidently offshoots of the same stylistic tradition, though somewhat differently interpreted. In the southern Buddha the eyes are more open and the head is larger in proportion to the figure, but the general resemblance is undeniable, particularly if these figures are seen in contrast to statuettes made under the contemporary Northern Wei dynasty. They may both be based on models imported from Khotan, which first reached the Hsia country and then the eastern part of Central China.

We know of no archaic Chinese sculptures (fifth century) which would warrant the supposition that there existed at that time a southern school of Buddhist sculpture based on influences from South India which reached China by the sea-route. Besides the two above-named statuettes there is only a minor stone stela (in the Boston Museum) dated with the *nien hao* of a southern dynasty—*i.e.*, in the first year of Chien Wu of the Ch'i dynasty (494)—but the head of it is gone, and what remains of the figure is not sufficient to permit any general conclusions as to a special stylistic current. It seems, indeed, to judge by the still existing scanty materials, as if the early Buddhist sculpture of the Yang-tzū valley had been moulded on influences from Central Asia, just as was the more abundant sculpture in northern provinces, but the influences which reached the Yang-tzū valley came along the southern transcontinental route, mainly from Khotan; whereas those which dominated at the artistic centres in Shansi and Honan came by the northern route over Tun-huang from Kucha and Tumchuk.

The material from the northern provinces is incomparably richer; most of the Buddhist sculptures in China of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth century are inscribed with *nien hao*s of the Northern Wei dynasty, or come from the part of the country over which this Tartar tribe extended its rule, but in consequence of the persecution of Buddhism and the destruction of the sacred images which took place in 446-450, it is only exceptionally that we find a figure dated prior to the middle of the century. An example of this earliest class is the small bronze statuette in a Japanese collection which was made in the fourth year of T'ai P'ing—*i.e.*, A.D. 444¹³. It represents a Buddha in the *abhaya* and *varada mudrā* standing against a leaf-shaped nimbus with

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flame borders (Fig. 26). The mantle is draped in Indian fashion (leaving one shoulder bare), the folds being arranged in thin parallel creases curving over the torso in a manner which reminds us of Indian sculptures from Mathurā of late Kushana and early Gupta periods.¹⁴ The type of the very large head points towards the same source of inspiration, though the eyes are more closed than in the early Indian sculptures.

A somewhat later and much larger variation of the same motif is the gilt bronze statue in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, which is said to be dated in accordance with the year 486 (Fig. 28). The interpretation of the Indian prototype has here become looser and freer. The face is more Chinese and the creases of the mantle folds have lost their original meaning; they hang like ornamental strings over the chest and branch out like thin flames or pitchforks over the arms. The artist who made this statue had no longer any real understanding of the significance of the creases or the method of draping. He simply transmitted the superficial appearance of some model which already may have been rather far removed from the original prototypes.

Several Chinese statues and statuettes of this type in stone and bronze might be illustrated, but it seems hardly necessary to multiply the examples at this place for the sake of our argument. We will have occasion presently to observe some similar figures in the Yün-kang caves. A word about the origin of the peculiar fold treatment, as exemplified by the statue in New York, may, however, be added here. It is often popularly called Gandharian, but, as pointed out by M. Joseph Hackin in an article in *Eastern Art*¹⁵ (where this and some other similar statues are reproduced), it is quite different from the decadent Hellenistic mode of arranging the mantle which may be seen in the Gandhara sculptures. According to his theory it would have been derived from the colossal Buddha statues at Bamiyan, which are assigned approximately to the second century A.D. These gigantic statues consist of a core of stone carved out of the solid rock and a thick covering shell of lime mortar fixed on the core by means of wooden plugs (a technical method which also was practised, for instance, on the big Buddha at Yün-kang). The wooden pegs were placed in curving rows, and between them were stretched cords which formed the core of the fold creases. In consequence of this technical procedure the folds took on the appearance of series of curving cords or strings hooked up at the shoulders or under the arms.

There can be no doubt that the colossal statues at Bamiyan, which were famous all over the Buddhist world and situated at a place which was visited by most of the pilgrims who passed from India to China, exercised a far-reaching influence. Their peculiarly schematic fold-design was imitated by most of the provincial sculptors who produced the innumerable clay images

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for the Buddhist cave-temples at Tumchuk, Kyzil, Khocho, Kucha, Shorchuk, Turfan and other places in Central Asia.¹⁶ And it was, as we shall see, transmitted in a somewhat corrupted form to Tun-huang and Yun-kang. In India it becomes evident in the decidedly string-like fold creases of the Gupta statues. But whether the Bamiyan colossi constituted the sole origin of this fold arrangement may be questioned, because a similar kind of folds appears already on some Kushana statues from the beginning of the first century A.D., though as yet only over the left arm and the one side of the figure. The tendency to conventionalize the fold creases in string-like fashion seems to have existed in India since early times, but it was developed into the most schematic and definite form on the statues at Bamiyan, and from here the new mode spread during the fourth and fifth centuries all over Eastern Asia. When it reached China it had degenerated into a rather superficial ornamental design without any intrinsic significance or technical reason.

Several of the more or less fragmentary clay statues which von le Coq brought to Berlin from the sanctuaries at Tumchuk, Kyzil, Shorchuk and Khocho illustrate how this fold arrangement was more or less arbitrarily corrupted in later times and transformed into fluttering creases which no longer convey any impression of the natural fall of the garments (Fig. 29). It seems hardly necessary to study these Central Asian clay images here in detail, because their artistic significance is quite moderate and none of them can be dated before the sixth century. The best examples of their kind are the more or less fragmentary figures from the so-called Statue Cave at Kyzil, which was decorated (according to von le Coq) about the middle of the sixth century, an approximate date which probably also may be applied to the clay statues, though these of course retain earlier traditions of style and in so far are interesting documents illustrating the transmission of long-accepted formulæ. The Indian transformation of the Bamiyan fold treatment, which reached its highest perfection in the Gupta sculptures, will be noted below in connection with the Chinese sculptures from the end of the sixth century.

The interrelation between early Chinese and Central Asian sculpture may best be studied in the cave temples at Yun-kang, where, so to speak, the two currents met and where some foreign workmen may have been employed or foreign models reproduced before the Chinese themselves were ready to transform the imported motifs in accordance with their own artistic consciousness and sense of style. The history of the Yun-kang caves, as far as it can be reconstructed from the records of the Northern Wei dynasty, has been told by Chavannes and more recently by Tokiwa and Sekino, and it seems therefore superfluous to dwell on it here.¹⁷ The work on the earliest cave-temples was started already in 414-415, but these were destroyed during the persecutions

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of Buddhism in the years 446-450, and it was only during the second period of activity, which set in about 452 and lasted until 494, that those sculptures were made which still exist, at least in part. The activity seems to have been particularly keen here during the 460's, 470's and 480's, but only two inscriptions have been found dated in the years 483 and 489. All the main statues are undated, and a chronology based on analysis of style must remain rather tentative, because workmen of varying standards seem to have been engaged here simultaneously, and foreign models may in some instances have been copied very closely.¹⁸

In a general way it may be said (as already pointed out) that two currents of style are to be distinguished in the Yün-kang sculptures, the one closely akin to the manner which dominates the clay sculptures in the early caves at Tun-huang and in the still earlier Buddhist sanctuaries further West, the other more purely Chinese—*i.e.*, characterized by a more refined linear stylization of the garments, more sensitive facial types and a decorative expressiveness which is quite absent in the statues of the Central Asian type. It was indeed this Chinese style which survived and determined the character of Buddhist sculpture from the end of the fifth century, but it would be rash to assert that all the statues of the Central Asian type at Yün-kang were executed before the others. Figures of this kind were occasionally produced in China even after the close of the fifth century.

The most prominent example of the Central Asian style at Yün-kang is the colossal Buddha and its adjoining Bodhisattva (the corresponding Bodhisattva on the other side being destroyed) (Fig. 30). The figures were placed in a large niche or grotto, of which only the back wall remains, and this is decorated with a large nimbus and a great number of small Buddhas, the whole composition representing the so-called Great Miracle. The Buddha is seated in the same posture as we have seen in some of the small bronze statuettes, the hands being in the *dhyānī mudrā*, and the mantle, which leaves part of the chest bare, shows a similar highly conventionalized fold design as observed on the bronze statue in the Metropolitan Museum. Most characteristic in this respect are those flat creases which spread out like flames or pointed tongues over the left arm and shoulder. The colossal size of the figure serves to emphasize the schematic mannerism in the fold treatment as well as the lack of sculptural form and the mask-like emptiness of the face. It may indeed be an enormously enlarged reproduction of some minor model in clay or bronze.

It is interesting to note that exactly the same manneristic arrangement of the mantle folds over the arm recurs in some of the earliest sculptures at Tun-huang, as may be seen on the two Buddhas seated in the main niche in

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cave 111 (Fig. 31). These statues are probably of about the same date or slightly earlier than the large Buddha at Yün-kang, but they are executed in clay on a minor scale which, so to speak, softens the manneristic features. Clay images of this type may have been known to the workmen at Yün-kang, who transformed them into stone, but the Tun-huang sculptures were in their turn dependent on earlier renderings of the same motifs probably existing in the Buddhist sanctuaries further West. As an example of this correspondence may be quoted a small wooden Buddha statuette from Tumchuk (in the Berlin Museum) which has the same type and plain skin-like mantle as some of the clay Buddhas in cave 111 at Tun-huang (Fig. 32), even though it may actually have been executed later.

None of the other sculptures at Yün-kang is quite as formless and schematic as the colossal Buddha, which evidently was made in closest adherence to imported models, yet there are a number of statues in which the same style predominates. Quite interesting in this respect are the Buddhas in cave 17, which contains an inscription of the year 489, a *terminus ante quem* for the sculptures. The largest figure in this cave (Fig. 33), a seated Buddha in the *dhyānī mudrā*, is still quite broad and heavy, and the folds of his thin mantle spread like thin flames or tongues over the arm, but they are not quite as schematic as on the colossal Buddha, and the facial mask is less plump and pudding-like. The somewhat smaller Buddhas in the same cave show a further progress in the same direction; their proportions are better, the forms have become more attenuated, the faces somewhat longer and narrower, and the mantle folds are no longer schematically spread out over a smooth surface, but pleated and arranged in long curves—a linear transformation which imparts to the statues a new decorative significance.

This transformation is evidently progressing gradually in the Yün-kang sculptures, be they seated Buddhas or standing Bodhisattvas. It reveals the growing sinization of the Buddhist images, the Chinese disposition to transform figures as well as garments into rhythmically designed linear formulæ (cf. Fig. 34). This is not the place to follow this evolution in detail. It is not dependent on foreign influences—quite the contrary. It is rather a process of gradual detachment from the Central Asian models, a striving to remodel the Buddhist images in accordance with indigenous traditions of style. It should simply be noted that it leads to some very beautiful results: figures in which the heavy and uncouth forms of the earlier statues are completely dissolved into thin elastic shapes defined by sinuous lines, accentuated in the folds of the garments, which spread out in wing-like shapes at the sides. The types become longer, the eyes and the lips thinner, sometimes simply like curving lines, yet smiling and suggestive of an introspective beauty. The spiritual import of the

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Buddhist symbols finds in these statues an artistic interpretation which hardly ever has been surpassed (*cf.* Sirén, *Chinese Sculpture*, Pls. 25, 40, 41, 47, 50, 51, 52, 56, 57, etc.). The distance between them and the Central Asian clay sculptures is enormous, if we measure it by standards of plastic art.

A similar development or gradual enfranchisement of Buddhist sculpture in China could be followed through series of stelæ or single figures from different provinces in Northern China, but it would require too much time to go through all this interesting material. Generally speaking, Chinese sculpture had freed itself from the foreign trammels and developed a style of its own about 500 or shortly before. But there are exceptions, examples of an archaistic survival of Central Asian models made after the middle of the sixth century. They are most commonly executed in bronze, but also in stone, though rarely with much artistic sense or expression. Among the bronze statuettes may be quoted those which are reproduced on Pl. 279 in my *Chinese Sculpture*, one of which is dated in accordance with the year 565, and among the stone sculptures of approximately the same period three votive stelæ, one in the Prince Li Household Museum in Seoul, one in the Boston Museum (both reproduced on Pl. 277 in *Chinese Sculpture*), and one in private possession in Japan (Fig. 35). The sculpture in Seoul is provided with a dated inscription of the year 578, which may or may not be authentic, but quite independent of this, it can be stated for stylistic reasons that these sculptures were made during the second half of the sixth century. Their archaism is over-mature, and their large nimbuses are decorated with a mass of small Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, besides flame patterns, of a kind that testifies to the period of execution, yet they are at the same time by their types and composition closely connected with the large Buddha at Yün-kang.

Generally the Chinese sculptures of this period, during which Northern China was ruled by the Northern Chou (550-577) and Northern Ch'i (557-581) dynasties, reflect quite different stylistic ideals. The Central Asian models are no longer predominating, the linear stylization has given place to a more plastic modelling, the draping of the thin garments serve to emphasize the sculptural form of the bodies, and the heads are full and strong. The new sculptural mode of expression was, no doubt, brought about by a growing recognition of the inherent possibilities of plastic art, a gradual maturing of the artistic consciousness, but it was at the same time accelerated by renewed influences from Indian art. Intercommunication between China and Northern India became more and more developed, and Indian monks came to China in growing numbers during the second half of the sixth century, and some of them may even have been skilled artisans or sculptors. It was no longer the Central Asian types which served as models, but real Indian works,

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mainly of the Mathurā school of the fifth and early sixth centuries. The characteristics of this school, as it developed in the Gupta period, are well known, particularly through the beautiful statues in the museums at Mathurā and Calcutta (Vogel, *La Sculpture de Mathurā*, Pls. 31-32). They are all represented in stiff erect postures, draped in thin, almost transparent mantles with folds conventionalized in string-like creases curving from the shoulders and arms over the body and legs. The heads are fuller and rounder than in the earlier figures and expressive of more individual character.

This characteristic Buddha type must have become well known in China through minor specimens. It is reflected in a number of statues which may be dated between 560 and 580, and it lingers still as a substratum in some of the most beautiful sculptures of the Sui and early T'ang periods, when the garments become ever lighter and more supple. Some of the marble statues from Sianfu may be quoted as examples of how this mode of draping was combined with the earlier (Northern Wei) manner of making the mantles spread in wing-like lobes at the sides (*cf.* Sirén, *Chinese Sculpture*, Pls. 270-271). Other statues of a softer micaceous marble executed in Western Hopei show a somewhat freer application of the Gupta mannerism. Their garments are draped in accordance with the Indian fashion, but the string-like folds are fewer and more widely separated than on the Gupta figures; the modelling of the torso and the limbs under the mantle is very slight, more like a suggestion than an actual rendering of the forms, as may be observed, for instance, in the large Buddha statue in the Toronto Museum (Fig. 36). Such was the normal, commonly accepted formula for the Buddha statues in Northern China about 575, but there are exceptions made in closer adherence to Indian models. Most interesting in this respect is the large headless Buddha in the Eumorfopoulos Collection, which also is a product of the West Hopei school (Fig. 37, *a, b*). In this figure the modelling of the muscular or fleshy parts of the body and limbs is accentuated in a fashion which is more Indian than Chinese, and the very abundant string-like fold creases are rendered much in the same way (though less regularly) as on the Gupta statues. Closely related to this is a still more ruined statue in the local museum at Ting-chou.

Another example worth mentioning in this connection is the standing Buddha in Mr. Winthrop's collection, which is draped in a freer Gupta style, though the folds are not marked in thin creases but with engraved double lines, evidently an easier method of obtaining a similar effect (Fig. 38). The rather elegant figure, which may be dated to the beginning of the Sui period, reminds us of Gupta sculptures not only by the treatment of the garment but also by its type. A comparison with the famous Buddha statue in the Mathurā Museum (Vogel, *op. cit.*, Pl. 32) may serve to illustrate the corre-

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spondence, but also the difference, as, for instance, in the expression of the face.

Several heads of Buddhas and monks of the Northern Ch'i and Sui periods might be quoted which show a marked resemblance with Mathurā heads of the Gupta period. We reproduce as examples a marble head from Shên-tung Ssü in Shantung (Fig. 39) (in the Pennsylvania Museum) and a sandstone head from T'ien-lung Shan (Fig. 40) (in the Louvre). The former in particular is modelled with a feeling for the structural form and soft skin which, generally speaking, is more characteristic of Indian than of Chinese sculpture, but its individualized life-like expression reveals indeed the Chinese mind. Among the Gupta heads which may serve as material for comparison may be recalled the beautiful Buddha head in the India Museum in London (Fig. 41).

These comparisons must here suffice to illustrate the Indian influence on Chinese sculpture at the end of the sixth century—*i.e.*, the transition period—when the archaic style was discarded and closer approaches to a full modelling in the round were introduced. The importance of the Indian influence was evidently in this respect considerable, and it might indeed be illustrated by a much greater number of monuments than can be mentioned at this place. Buddhist sculpture may be said to have reached one of its high-water marks in China at this time, and branched out in many local schools in which the foreign elements are more or less evident. Quite important in this respect are the sculptures executed at the end of the Northern Ch'i period in one or two of the T'ien-lung Shan caves (Fig. 42). In cave 16 there are three large niches each occupied by a large Buddha seated cross-legged in the *abhaya* and *varada mudrā*, two bhikkhus and two Bodhisattvas. The Buddhas are particularly well modelled and draped in Gupta fashion in thin mantles which sweep very tightly over the full bodies. The formal treatment as well as the types so closely resemble certain Gupta sculptures that one may be justified in supposing that a direct influence from India had reached the artists who were active at T'ien-lung Shan. Indian monks may have come to this place, which was not very distant from Wu-tai Shan, a place of pilgrimage famous also in the homeland of Buddhism. It may be added that the Indian influence subsisted at T'ien-lung Shan also in the T'ang period, as proved by some of the later sculptures which until a few years ago were found there.

The influences from Northern India to Northern China, which we have illustrated by a few specimens of Chinese sculpture of the fifth and sixth centuries, came overland either by the southern or the northern transcontinental route. In earlier times they were evidently rather modified during the passage through the various Buddhist centres from Tumchuk to Tun-huang; in

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later times they were transmitted in a purer form by Indian and Chinese pilgrims who served as messengers of religion and art. But besides these some influences from Southern India or Indo-China must have found their way into China proper by the sea-route. We know from historical records that it was frequently used by religious and political emissaries who travelled between China and Kambodja, then known as the kingdom of Funan.¹⁹ Several rulers of this country were devoted Buddhists; they kept up inter-communications with India and took a keen interest in the propagation of Buddhist faith and art. It would carry us too far to relate here all that is known about the Funanese embassies and missionaries to China, but it may be noted that an embassy left Funan in 503 with a Buddha statue in coral for the emperor Liang Wu Ti, and this was followed by several other embassies bringing sacred writings and gifts to the court of the Liang in Nanking. And when the kingdom of Funan was conquered by Chen-la (about 627), this country continued to send envoys and gifts to the court of T'ang. The artistic traditions of Funan can hardly have remained unknown in Central China, but the influence that they may have exercised is difficult to trace, because all the Buddhist art produced under the Liang and their predecessors in this part of the country has perished. Yet it may be that some repercussions from the southern regions reached further north-west into the contemporary empire of the Northern Ch'i dynasty, which extended over Shansi, Honan and a part of Hopei. Certain still existing sculptures may possibly be taken as indications of such direct or indirect influences from Southern India.

There are two large reliefs in the Freer Gallery in Washington representing a Buddhist Paradise and scenes of Adoration of Buddha which come from the cave-temples of Nan-hsiang T'ang, near Chang-tê fu in Honan. By their general stylistic appearance they must be classified in the Northern Ch'i period, but their manner of composition and technical execution are rather unusual. They are spread out over wide fields, and the further scenes are placed above those which belong to the foreground, but there is at the same time a definite indication of a unified space (particularly noticeable in the Paradise scene) (Fig. 43). The figures are flat but largely undercut, so that they appear detached from the background, and they are clearly arranged in three or four successive vertical layers. The Buddha on the lotus throne occupies not only the central axis of the slab: he sits in the centre of a spacial composition. In front of him is the lotus pond of the Paradise, and the diagonal lines from the lower as well as from the upper corners meet in this central figure. In the other relief the space composition is less unified; it is divided into three sections by a pair of pillars, and as the upper portion of the central section is missing, the dominating position of the central Buddha is perhaps less striking

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(Fig. 44). The scenes at the sides seem to refer to the life of some Bodhisattva, possibly Maitreya, who to the left is speaking to a group of heavenly disciples, and to the right receives an ordination or a command from a Buddha. Both these scenes apparently take place in Tushita heaven, and below them are rows of seated Bodhisattvas. The architectural elements, which in the other relief contribute to the creation of depth and a unified space, are here missing, but the figures are executed in the same manner, largely undercut and at some places arranged in two or three successive layers, the one behind the other.

It may be claimed that these reliefs reproduce pictorial compositions more or less of the kind that we know from the Tun-huang paintings, but the resemblance is quite remote, and the artistic language in which they are expressed is more distinctly Indian than in any of those paintings. The types of the figures, their comparatively free and varied postures and the draping of the Buddha's mantle over one shoulder (in the Paradise scene) are rather South Indian features, and the same may be said of the method of composing the relief in successive vertical layers with comparatively flat, undercut figures. Indian reliefs of quite corresponding character may not be so easily found (at least not among the scanty material at my disposal), nor is it likely that such would have been known to the artists who worked at Nan-hsiang T'ang, but if we turn to the sculptures from Nāgārjunikonda, of which the most important fragment is in the Musée Guimet, we may observe in them essential features of style and composition which correspond to those pointed out in the reliefs from Nan-hsiang T'ang.²⁰ The Nāgārjunikonda relief is composed in a similar fashion, though with greater freedom and far more movement in the figures (Fig. 46). It is particularly interesting to us as an example of South Indian sculpture of the third or fourth century, which presumably exercised a decisive influence on the Buddhist art of Funan, from where it may have been transmitted to China in a somewhat modified form. And as Funanese art also reached Java, it may explain why later Javanese relief compositions show some resemblance with the above mentioned Chinese monuments.

Unfortunately very little of the earliest Buddhist sculpture in Kambodja has been preserved; the most important remains are two standing Buddha figures, a head, and a minor seated figure without head, now in the museum at Phnom Penh. They have all been excavated at Romlok, near Ta Keò, and are commonly classified as specimens of Funanese art from the beginning of the sixth century.²¹

The Buddha head (Fig. 47) has been characterized by various authorities (Coedès, Groslier, Bachhofer, etc.) as a derivation from a type known

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through sculptures of the Amarāvati school, such as the small marble head in the Musée Guimet, but nobody will deny that the Indian type has been freely modified in this Kambodjan work of the early sixth century. The type has become much fuller and stronger than in the Amarāvati head: the eyes are more closed, the nose is broader, the lips more arched. By these and other modifications it takes on a greater resemblance with Chinese Buddha heads from the latter half of the sixth century. This becomes quite evident if we compare it with the heads of some of the statues from Nan-hsiang T'ang, the caves from which the above-mentioned reliefs also originate (Fig. 48). In these the shape of the head has become still broader, the expression more powerful, but there is a certain correspondence in the treatment of the main features such as the eyes, the nose and the mouth. Such heads are more or less typical of Chinese figures of the Northern Ch'i period (no longer after the close of this period), though the resemblance with the Funanese head is stronger in the Nan-hsiang T'ang sculptures than in any other statues known to us.

This correspondence between Chinese sculptures from the end of the Northern Ch'i period and a somewhat earlier Funanese work is, however, not supported by the standing Buddhas in the museum at Phnom Penh, which also are said to come from Romlok. They seem to reflect influences which are not so apparent in the head and may not be quite contemporary. Particularly the smaller one, a very subtle and elegant figure, impresses us as a more Indian creation (Fig. 49); its long oval head is quite unlike the one described above, and has little connection with the Chinese types. Both figures are represented in undulating *hanché* postures; their garments are thin and smooth, without any indication of folds, more or less of the same kind as we find on the Dvāravati statues in the museum in Bangkok. The local school in which they were produced must have had close connections with early Siamese art, but I am not in a position to define their derivation more definitely.

If such figures became known in China, their style as expressed in the swinging postures and the transparent garments was hardly realized until the beginning of the seventh century. Only then the traditional stiff postures were occasionally modified by swinging and bending movements (particularly in Bodhisattva statues), and the human organism became an instrument of artistic expression. The renewed Indian influences which at least in part caused these modifications reached China by the overland route rather than by the sea route; it was the one followed by most of the pilgrims and envoys who at the beginning of the T'ang period strengthened the links of art and religion between China and India, bringing about certain modifications also in the field of sculpture which cannot be further discussed at this place.

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If we are to admit that South Indian sculpture exercised some influence on Buddhist sculpture in China through the intermediary of its provincial offshoots along the Kambodjan coast, it seems most likely that this took place during the sixth century, when Buddhist art had reached a certain expansion in Funan and the relations between this country and the great empire of the Liang were fully developed.

NOTES

¹ A number of such kneeling bronze figures are published in Bishop White's book, *Tombs of Old Loyang* (Shanghai, 1934), Pls. 76-83, and are said to have been found in the same tomb as the Pao bells, which are dated by an inscription about 550.

² Our illustration of the Lion Gate at Boghaz-kuei is borrowed from Walter Andrae, *Die Kunst Vorderasiens*, in Vol II. of *Propylden Kunstgeschichte* (Berlin, 1925). The correspondence between these gate-lions and the Chinese lion from T'ung Ch'iao t'ai is one of type and application rather than of style.

³ The photograph of the Babylonian lion was handed to me many years ago by Dr. G. B. Gordon in Philadelphia. The resemblance between this monument and the horse standing over a fallen warrior at the tomb of Ho Chu-ping was first pointed out by Dr. Carl Hentze in an article in *Artibus Asiae*, I., 1925.

⁴ The fabulous winged animals of the Achæmenians are well represented in the glazed brick reliefs from Darius' palace in Susa, now in the Louvre.

⁵ Cf. O. M. Dalton, *The Treasure of the Oxus* (London, 1926), Pl. 25, where the statuette is dated in the fourth century; other authorities date it in the second century.

⁶ Cf. J. Hackin, *Nouvelles Recherches Archéologiques à Bamiyan* (Paris, 1933), Pl. LXXVIII.

⁷ Cf. Ségalen's article, *Premier Exposé des Résultats Archéologiques*, etc., in *Journal Asiatique*, Mai-Juin, 1915; and the illustrations in Ségalen, Voisins, Lartigue, *Mission Archéologique en Chine* (Atlas, Vol. I.), Pls. 54-56.

⁸ The Imperial tombs in the neighbourhood of Tan-yang and Nanking have been identified and discussed from a historical point of view by Père Mathias Tchang in his book, *Tombeau des Liang* (Shanghai, 1912), and some of them are illustrated in Ségalen, Voisins, Lartigue, *Mission Archéologique en Chine* (Atlas, Vol. II.), Pls. 69-71.

⁹ The Chinese review, *T'ien Hsia*, December, 1935, contains an article by Dr. Ku Teng, *A Few Notes on the Forms of Some Han Sculptures*, in which he illustrates two winged chimæras hitherto unknown to me. One of them is said to come from the tomb of Tsung Tzū in the district of Nan-yang in Honan, and the other from a neighbouring tomb; they are both now on exhibition in Hsüan Miao Kuan in Nan-yang. Stylistically they belong to the same group as the large chimæras in the University Museum in Philadelphia.

¹⁰ The informations from *Hou Han Shu* are quoted by Omura, *Shina Bijutsu-shui*. Cf. Sirén, *Chinese Sculpture from the Fifth to the Fourteenth Century*, p. xxxiii, note.

¹¹ The statuette belongs to Mr. K. Yamaguchi, Ashiya, Kobe, but has to my knowledge never been reproduced.

¹² The Tuan Fang statuette is reproduced by Omura in *Shina Bijutsu-shui*, Vol. I., Pl. 154, and also in Sirén, *Chinese Sculpture*, Pl. 16.

¹³ When I photographed this statuette in 1922 it belonged to Mr. Eto in Tokyo, but it has since passed into other hands.

¹⁴ Indian statues from Mathurā of the Kushana period are reproduced in Vogel, *La Sculpture de Mathurā* (*Ars Asiatica*, Vol. XV.), Pls. 26-28.

Indian and Other Influences in Chinese Sculpture

¹⁵ Cf. Hackin's article, *The Colossal Buddhas at Bamyan, their Influence on Buddhist Sculpture in Eastern Art*, Vol. I., No. 2.

¹⁶ Some characteristic specimens of the clay statues from Kyzil, Shorchuk and Khocho are reproduced in von le Coq, *Buddhistische Spätantike*, Vol. I., Pls. 38, 39, 40.

¹⁷ Cf. Chavannes, *Mission Archéologique dans la Chine Septentrionale*, Tome 1 (Paris, 1915), pp. 294-300; D. Tokiwa and T. Sekino, *Buddhist Monuments in China*, Part II. (Tokyo, 1926).

¹⁸ The most valuable contributions to the discussion of the evolution of style in early Buddhist sculptures in China are contained in Ludwig Bachhofer's article *Die Anfänge der buddhistischen Plastik in China* (*Ostasiat. Zeitschrift*, 1934, Hefte 1/2 and 3/4). The correspondence between certain sculptures at Yün-kang and Tun-huang is here well brought out, and also their relation to certain sculptures from Central Asia, though the author's chronological conclusions seem in some cases rather too definite.

¹⁹ The historical documents re the relations between Funan and China have been published in translation by Paul Pelliot in *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême Orient*, Vol. III., and the main dates from these are reported in the introduction to *Guide Madrolle, Indochine du Sud*. The first embassy from Funan arrived in China in 243, and it was followed by numerous later ones, the last one being despatched in 627, when the Funanese asked for the support of China against the victorious Chen-la conquerors.

²⁰ The relief now in the Musée Guimet formed part of the decoration of the large stupa at Nāgārjunikonda. Other fragments of the same sculptural decoration, which have been excavated later, are illustrated in *Annual Bibliography of Indian Archeology*, 1926 and 1930. Their stylistic relation to other schools of Indian sculpture is discussed by L. Bachhofer in his article in *Ostasiat. Zeitschrift*, 1934, Hefte 1/2.

²¹ These specimens of Funanese sculpture, which here are reproduced from my own photographs, have been published by G. Groslier in *Les Collections Khmères du Musée Albert Sarraut* (*Ars Asiatica*, Vol. XVI).

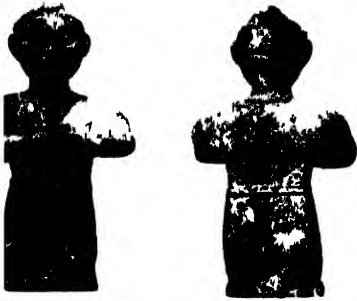


FIG. 1. KNEELING TOILET-BLANK
clayette. Middle-Egyptian, c. 1300 B.C. (Royal
Ontario Museum, Toronto)



FIG. 2. ALBIAN Limestone. Fragment of a large
statue. (Museum of Art, New York)



FIG. 3. ALBIAN Limestone
Fragment of a large statue. (Museum of Art, New York)



FIG. 4. TOILET-BLANK OF A LION, WHICH HAS
SERVED AS EARTH AT A DOORWAY
About 1300 B.C. (Okura Museum, Tokyo)



FIG. 5. THE LION. ALBIAN Limestone
Fragment of a large statue.

PLATE II

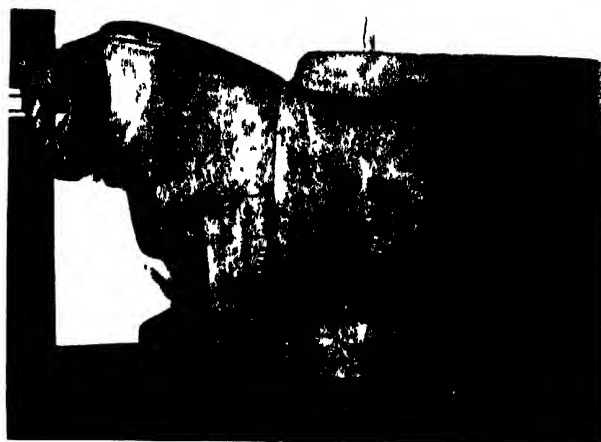


FIG. 1. BULL (LITHO) FROM INJIEJI
Hubei, China. National Museum, Berlin



FIG. 2. BULL (LITHO) IN THE HAIR OF THE
CHINESE MOUNTAIN CATTLE



FIG. 3. BULL (LITHO) FROM WEIJIANG ZI
WITH A MOUNTAIN ANIMAL
CATTLE



FIG. 4. BULL (LITHO) WITH A MOUNTAIN ANIMAL
Museum of the Chinese Academy

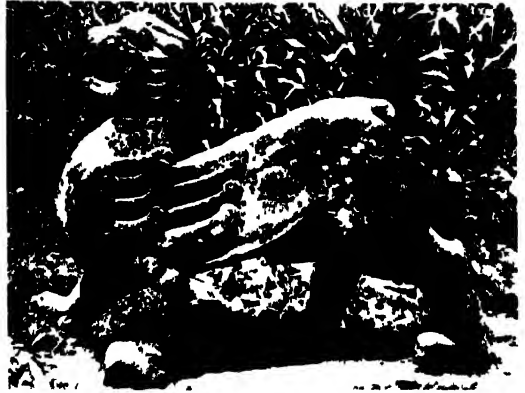


FIG. 5. BULL (LITHO) STANDING OVER A MOUNTAIN ANIMAL
From the tomb of the Ching-shi, Shensi. Cattle



THE VINETOWN

THE VINETOWN IN THE FORM OF A
THE VINETOWN



THE VINETOWN IN THE FORM OF A
THE VINETOWN



THE VINETOWN IN THE FORM OF A
THE VINETOWN



THE VINETOWN IN THE FORM OF A
THE VINETOWN

THE VINETOWN



THE VINETOWN IN THE FORM OF A
THE VINETOWN

PLATE IV



FIG. 14. WINGED CHIMERA.
Formerly belonging to M. Grojean in Teking.



FIG. 15. WINGED CHIMERA.
Private collection, Stockholm.



FIG. 16. WINGED CHIMERA FROM A TOMB IN HONAN.
Museum of the Louvre, Paris.



FIG. 18. LARGE WINGED CHIMERA FROM A TOMB IN HONAN.
The University Museum, Philadelphia.



THE SEATED FIGURE IN THE MUSEUM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



THE SEATED FIGURE IN THE MUSEUM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



THE SEATED FIGURE IN THE MUSEUM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



THE SEATED FIGURE IN THE MUSEUM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



FIGURE 1
Seated Buddhist Figure
Museum of Art, University of California, Berkeley



FIGURE 2
Seated Buddhist Figure
Museum of Art, University of California, Berkeley



FIGURE 3
Seated Buddhist Figure
Museum of Art, University of California, Berkeley



FIGURE 4
Seated Buddhist Figure
Museum of Art, University of California, Berkeley



PLATE 31—THE LARGE STATUE OF A BODHISATTV
FROM THE TUNGCHIAI CHANG
Metropolitan Museum, N. Y.



PLATE 32—THE GROUP OF STATUES OF THE
BODHISATTVAS FROM THE TUNGCHIAI CHANG
Metropolitan Museum, N. Y.



PLATE 33—SMALL SEATED STATUE OF A
BODHISATTV FROM TUNGCHIAI
Metropolitan Museum, N. Y.



PLATE 34—THE MAINTAINING OF THE
BODHISATTVAS
Metropolitan Museum, N. Y.

PLATE VIII



FIG. 30. —THE COLOSSAL BUDDHA AT
YÜN-KANG.



FIG. 33. —SEATED BUDDHA IN CAVE 17 AT
YÜN-KANG.



FIG. 34. — SEATED BUDDHA OF CHINESE TYPE
IN CAVE 24 AT YÜN-KANG.

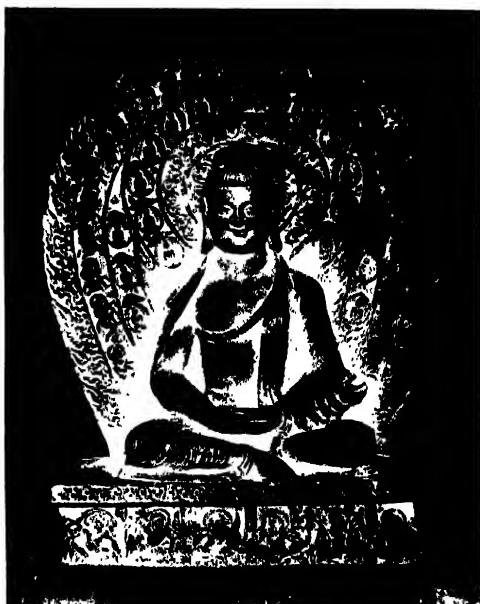


FIG. 35.— AGATE SEITŌ, ABOUT 500-70.
Private collection, Japan



FIG. 36. LARGE BUDDHA, MATHURA.
IN MUSEUM.

National Ontario Museum, Toronto.



FIG. 35. LARGE BUDDHA, MATHURA.
IN MUSEUM.

Mr. Green II. White, New York.



FIG. 37. A AND B. FRONT AND BACK VIEW OF THE LARGE MATHURA BUDDHA IN THE
TUMORILOLOLUS COLLECTION, VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM.



FIG. 37. HEAD OF A MONK. MARBLE
VI. VI. 50.

British Museum, Edinburgh.



FIG. 38. HEAD OF A BUDDHA. MARBLE
VI. VI. 51.

Idem.



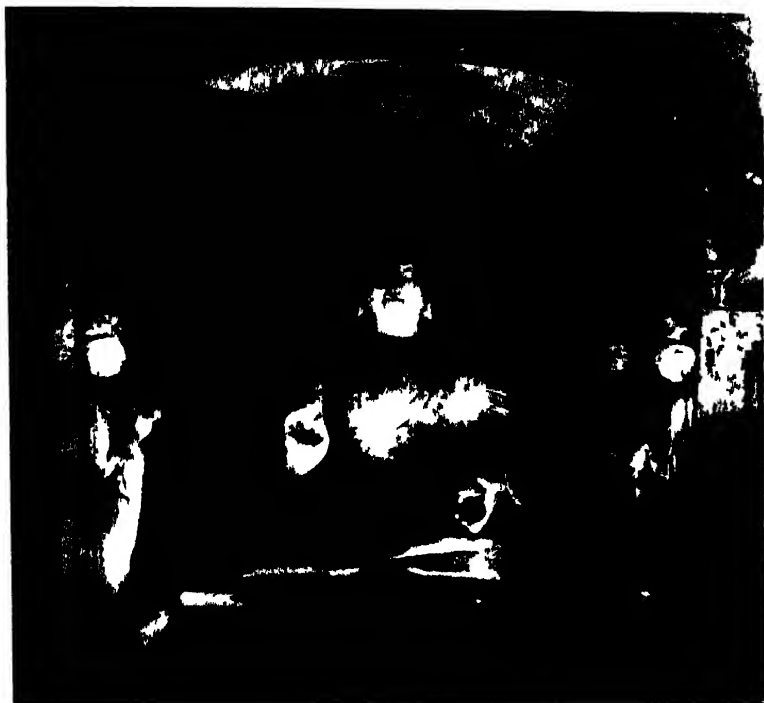
FIG. 39. HEAD OF A BUDDHA. MARBLE
VI. VI. 52.

British Museum, London.



FIG. 40. BUDDHA HEAD IN LIMESTONE.

Musee Albert Sacre, Louvain-la-Neuve.



PL. 41. LARGE BUDDHA IN THE ENLARGED CAVE IN THE EASTERN GROUP.



PL. 42. THE CENTRAL BUDDHA IN THE ENLARGED CAVE IN THE EASTERN GROUP.



FIG. 13. HEAD OF A MONK FROM
KAN-HSIANG-TANG
Formerly Kelokran, No. 5, 11



FIG. 14. THE GREAT RELIEF, KATHI IN TIME-TONE
The Great Wall, China



FIG. 15. ADAPTATION OF A BUDDHIST SCENE FROM THE LIFE OF LODHISALAYA, KATHI IN TIME-TONE
The Great Wall, China

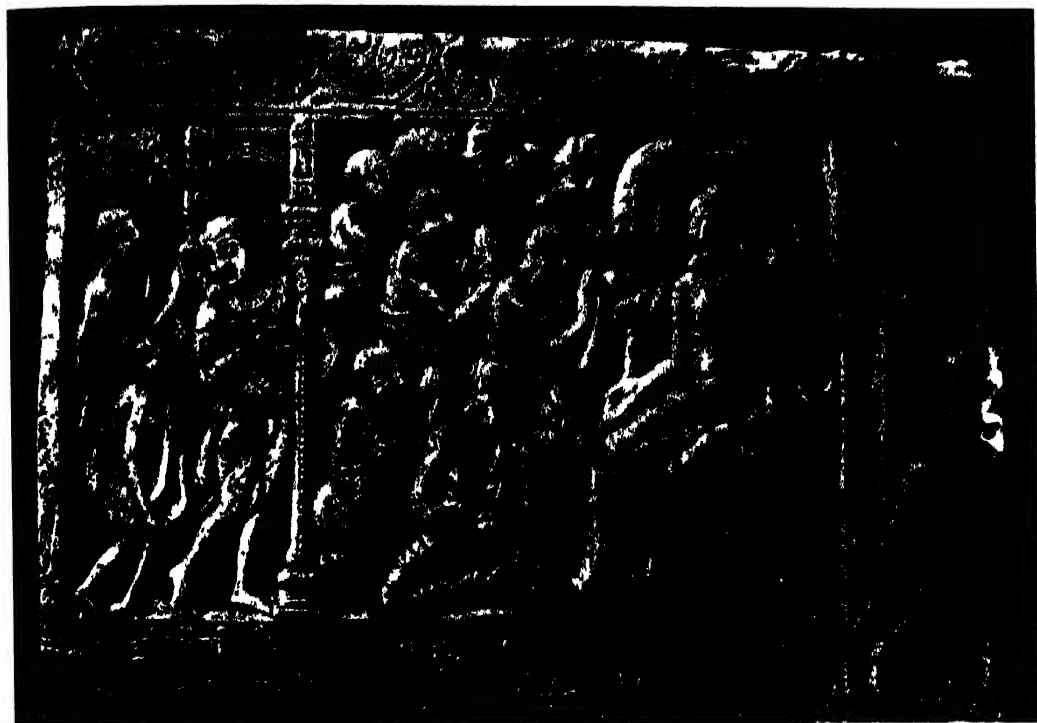


FIG. 46. RELIEF FROM THE STUVA AT NAGARJUNA, NEA.
Musée Guimet, Paris



FIG. 49. BUDDHA STATUE. PROBABLY THIRTH
CENTURY.
Musée Albert Sarraut, Phnom Penh



FIG. 50. BUDDHA STATUE. PROBABLY THIRTH
CENTURY.
Musée Albert Sarraut, Phnom Penh

CHAPTER III

AN APPROACH TO CHINESE SCULPTURE*

BY LANGDON WARNER

THE only hardship we Westerners must face when we try to get full value from the rich storehouse of Far Eastern sculpture is the wrench that inevitably comes when prejudice is to be lopped off. If we can bring ourselves to look squarely at the things themselves and forget for the moment that sentimentality which predisposes us to like or dislike, and forget our inherent distrust of the unfamiliar, we shall find the job is done. We are at once made free of a whole fresh country of delight.

Now what has been commonly labelled scholarship—all dates and names and biographies of artists and lists of their pupils—can not by any stretch of imagination be labelled Chinese sculpture. That is manifestly stone or wood or bronze, as the case may be, which has been wrought into shape for a symbol.

The true scholarship and the lean hard thinking seems to me to lie in the things themselves rather than in training the memory to store up dates and dynasties and foreign names.

I should like, then, for a few moments to practise this approach to Chinese sculpture in front of the objects themselves. And let me assure you that there need be no fear that this process will cheat you of beauty or that an insensitive person can go far on this road. Carried logically to its manifest end, it brings you up against high beauty and poetry and to deep philosophical concepts. You will be forced to a sober contemplation of a mysticism that none but noble and adept spirits may share. All your Christian heritage will be evoked. You will need a sound comprehension of your own mediæval European background, for that was not merely kin to the heritage of the Oriental craftsmen and saints; it was precisely and actually their own.

I have chosen, to show the traditional scholar's difficulty in looking at

* Lecture delivered in connection with the International Exhibition of Chinese Art, 1935-36, in the Hall of the Royal Society on January 3, 1936.

An Approach to Chinese Sculpture

Oriental sculpture and to demonstrate it by failure at the very beginning, one of the greatest treasures in bronze from your magnificent exhibition (Pl. 1). It was sent by the Japanese Baron Sumitomo as one of the most important objects that have survived from Chinese antiquity.

Let us see how the approach to the thing itself helps in understanding its beauties. Stripped of non-essentials, what fundamental things about it must we require for sound appreciation? Obviously one of these is the technical method by which it was made and the refractory material used. For without the stuff to shape and tools to shape it no thing can be made by man—whether sonnet or statue or ritual jar.

Before this thing could stand in bronze the craftsman modelled his clay to the shape of the inside surfaces. Then he overlaid the lump with thick wax, modelled into the surfaces we see. Outside all this he fitted another clay wall, close to every cranny and modelled curve. Then through vents, leading down to the wax, he poured his molten bronze to melt and displace the wax through lower vents and settle delicately on the contours. When it was cold he broke away the outer clay and scooped out the clay core. The vessel was there, complete. No doubt he clarified the detail in the cold metal with a graver, rubbed off the lumps and emphasized outlines and possibly even enriched the whole surface with fire-gilt.

The more familiar we are with the difficult art of the bronze caster, and with the art of modelling in wax, the better we are repaid by contemplating this noble example of one of the most difficult techniques evolved by man. It gives us fresh respect for the material culture of the Chinese twenty-seven centuries ago. Surely a fresh vision is ahead of us if we apprentice ourselves to bronze-makers to learn of what their stuff is capable and incapable. Only so can we hope to get full value from the master's touch, whether it is the work of the Egyptians or the Greeks or of Cellini or of our own contemporaries.

Taking it for granted that we have conceived this thing in one of its essentials—that of material and technique—what, then, else should we look for which every work of art must contain to take tangible form? Obviously another fundamental—before we can know its beauty or judge its place in any culture—is its purpose. No matter how fleeting or ignoble or ill-defined, *some* purpose must be in the artist's mind before his work can take tangible or visible or audible shape.

Unfortunately in this case, as in almost all other early ritual vessels from China, no man knows its precise reason for being. Many of these shapes have special names and are vaguely known to have been used in the ceremonial seething of meat or libation of wine or cooking of grain. But how the patron intended to use it when he gave the order to the craftsman, not even the

An Approach to Chinese Sculpture

learned and ingenious Professor Yelts can tell us. To what dim altar a mysterious priest made offering of this massive bronze we cannot guess. Was it at dawn on the day of solstice, and did an emperor, fasting all night, shiver in the wind as the sun came up? If so, what power did he invoke and what ceremonial slaughter had been done beside it? Or did some princeling of the Chou dynasty order this vessel of prescribed shape to be set up in the tablet-chamber of his ancestors? What was the formal image in the craftsman's mind that made this animal shape and human head inevitable for this one purpose? Scholars have called it an ogre devouring a man, and a tiger suckling a human being. You and I know that whatever name the pattern went by—tiger or dragon—it was merely the shape presented to the eye. In reality it was neither of these things, but a representation in bronze of some abstraction familiar to the Chinese of that day. In common words it was a symbol, and if we do not know what it symbolized we can have no conception of its value as a work of art. The proof of this is that we know the bronze beast and even the somewhat human-looking man were never meant to function biologically. No one in his senses would criticize them from the point of view of the student of anatomy. We have reason to believe that they were recognizable and entirely competent symbols, and we know that they are in a foreign tongue for us.

Ignorant as we are of purpose, fairly competent judges of technique and material, what other fundamental can we presume to examine? Or must we give up hope of sound appreciation? The other essential is commonly called the Formal Image. It is the picture in the craftsman's mind of *what* he has to produce—not merely its outward shape. To study and reconstruct that particular picture as far as possible we must know the craftsman's background, his religion, and, if he is making a vessel for a special ritual, we must know his symbols so intimately that they appear to us the only conceivable ones for that purpose. In dealing with the archaic we are again baulked by ignorance.

Then are we reduced to vapid admiration and to sentimental gaping at externals? In this one case we can but concentrate on the technique, study the use of materials and the art of the modeller, and hope that, next year or a score of years hence, we may have laboriously translated fresh inscriptions and examined the results of the latest excavations. Then some chance find may provide us with the facts to give a comprehending sense of the purpose and of the formal image in the brain of its maker.

What of sheer beauty? Is not that our quest and are we to be cheated of its quick intuitive flash by some mechanical rules that sound well enough but can never imprison what the poet tries to tell?

In all soberness it is my belief that beauty lies within the object, not in

An Approach to Chinese Sculpture

the beholder; and that mere appreciation of ~~external beauty~~ can never satisfy. The satiny surfaces of some bronzes ~~and their clear greens and reds~~ are not fundamental in their making. We should enjoy them as the lovely chemical reactions of long burial that they are. They serve but to paint the lily and are not proper to it—whatever high prices the dealers may put on them. This bronze I believe to have been a noble thing wrought with consummate skill and fitted for some high purpose that was plain in the artist's mind before ever he modelled wax or poured metal.

In Chinese sculpture not all is so hopeless of comprehension as in the case of these first archaic bronzes made in so dim a past. Let us not labour the point but look at some great originals in rapid succession, merely keeping in mind the craftsman's essentials of purpose, technique and formal image in the hope that they may prove to be of use in comprehending beauty.

On the stone walls of tombs in Shantung Province are graved pictures—hardly sculpture if you will, but fine patterns made permanent by the chisel in line at least, though the colour that made them gay has long since worn off. These are didactic stories of still more ancient days, recalling, to the Chinese of the first century who made them, the virtuous men and heroes of the past.

You will see where the chisel has followed the brush-line with exactness, and the result is a series of great stone maps, as it were, of shapes that recall with perfect adequacy each familiar story. Here purpose is simple, and the stone-cutter's technique can be reconstructed by any modern who has a realizing sense of mallet and chisel and rock. First the slab was dressed to an even vertical surface on which the outline was drawn with a brush. The chisel-point was then malleted along that guiding line, insisting on its own characteristic curve and run and hesitation. Thus brush-technique was properly obliterated, for granite and iron are now in control. Then the background was cut away from the grooved line with a toothed chisel to leave a scored rough surface that is slightly in retreat. Probably at the same time this rougher background provided a tooth for the whitewash to grip, and on that the coloured pigment was spread.

Now if these grand high-action cobs are successful works of art it is not in the least because of any precise likeness to flesh-and-blood horses, but because they are acceptable symbols to us of the weight and power of cavalry (Pl. 2). That tree might be the very Tree of Life, so abstract and geometrical are its branches and its outline (Pl. 3). It is successful stonemasonry and extremely bad botany. I doubt if a more life-like rendering, a closer approach to photography would ever be so apt a symbol or suggest the story in such dashing style.

For comparison and contrast I show here a bit of common folk-sculpture

in another technique—that of the clay modeller (Pl. 4). I choose it deliberately for a sound and adequate specimen which even we may easily comprehend without extravagant admiration. It is a pottery cock, buried with its owner within a century or so of the time of Christ and said to be, as with us, a symbol of dawn and awakening to the spirit world. It is conceived geometrically and formally, as must be the case when a carved wood mould receives wet clay. They were manufactured by the score out of clay, pressed into two half-moulds and then baked. Even we, two thousand years after, seize the symbolic cockiness, and it would never occur to the most literal of us to judge it by any naturalistic standard or by the beauty of feathers in life.

If we had but a thousand examples of the household gear of this Han period, as we have of the furniture of their graves, how close we might reach to the minds of the Chinese craftsmen through their ordinary carvings!

One would like—in this short hour—to take up the coming of the gentle Indian religion of Buddhism to China across Central Asia and to trace, through its sculptural shapes, its stop in Afghanistan and the North-West Provinces. For it was in that region the outward shape of Buddhist images took the slight taint of half-breed Western blood that was nearly to kill all real symbolism and that was only gradually to be purified out and lived down (Pl. 5). The skill and surpassing loveliness of Greek tradition never could be transmitted intact to uncomprehending peoples. If the Romans missed it, how much more the stone carvers of a doubtful ancestry living under satraps left by Alexander's raid and serving Buddhist patrons. The wonder of it is that, here and there, a debased classical shape may still be traced, and that the ingenious scholars of France have been able successfully to demonstrate that late Greek mannerisms were in very fact employed in fashioning the images of Gautama Buddha. One example in a thousand shows real skill and almost as few have the power of religious symbols—that power we recognize in a flash to transcend all natural likeness—the power that gives us shapes and beauties born of the formal images in man's brain who has conceived God.

No more engrossing study is to be imagined than trying to trace the effect of the new Buddhist symbols on the style of the Chinese sculptors, whose ancient practices of bronze and stone sculpture were already set in the stiff mould of centuries. That the change of external shapes was so abrupt and, to our distant eyes, so lacking in transition was due, of course, in large measure to the new purpose.

Now this purpose was the service of the religion that had been introduced—Buddhism. Something of the vigour of that fresh idea which informed the Chinese and the semi-barbarians on their northern marches may be caught by us today. I do not know how it is with this generation in England, but I find

An Approach to Chinese Sculpture

American youth oddly reluctant to comprehend symbols unfamiliar to them in art. They will readily admit that their own are valid. In Harvard College a young man will go so far as to cash the cheque on which purely symbolic figures have been written, and accept from his bank an intrinsically worthless token which is valid in exchange for a top hat—that symbol of respectability.

The same young man will readily admit that a tangible cross of wood can symbolize to certain minds the teaching of our Lord. But show him a strange symbol—the Lotus—the Wheel of the Law—the holy footprints of the Buddha represented in stone—and he will gape. More pernicious still, he will sometimes attempt to judge this tangible formalized image of abstraction as “good” or “bad” in proportion as it resembles some lotus or wheel or footprint he has seen. It needs an unexpected deal of goodwill on his part to achieve the realizing sense that these are precise concrete substitutes to fetch up abstractions in his mind, or that they must fail if they seem correct copies of other concrete objects.

Our American students of Chinese sculpture seem to have travelled so far from their own heritage of mediæval Christian art that even when the human shape is used formally and diagrammatically to express something other than humanity they are prone to compare it with the shapes of their running and rowing and baseball-playing mates. Thus I once showed in all seriousness a Buddha footprint cut in stone, with the Wheel of the Law engraved within its outlines (Pl. 6). It was a squarish oblong diagram with stubby toes, and there was no way of telling whether it was right or left. My young friends rocked with laughter. And in a flash I saw—not the sacred impress of the Enlightened One come down to earth to share his enlightenment with man, but the sort of ill-shaped body that might own such square and stub-toed feet. It seemed (and was) horrid as a man, even so gross that no boots could fit him. My class, though they knew intellectually what to expect, rejected the symbol from pure ignorance and forgot the stony medium to send their lively imaginations coursing down a false scent that led nowhere.

Now back to China where the converts were eager for the new abstractions and entirely content with the concrete symbols used to express them.

Icons for the imported worship had been fetched across Central Asia; little portable figures of the Buddha in bronze and holy scrolls illustrated with the hieratic shapes long ago established in India and in the small Buddhist states of the trade route. These were as much part of the carrying trade to China by missionaries and returning pilgrims as was the jade fetched over the same trade route or the outgoing silk their caravans met.

The priest's training included the correct drawing of these symbols. He

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must represent the Lotus, the Wheel, the incarnate Buddha and Bodhisattva correct in detail as he had learned their symbolic attributes by rote of heart in the Holy Land. The god, in his mental image, looked precisely thus or thus, not otherwise. And it was so the Chinese carvers of rock and casters of bronze must show these symbols to meet the demands of their new patrons. Precisely recognizable they were, of course, to any ancient or modern Indian Buddhist. But equally, of course, there was a difference, and the superficial style was Chinese. Drawings and small portable bronzes and word-of-mouth descriptions must serve as iconographic guides for Chinese stone-cutters faced with the task of imposing this newly acquired mental image on the granitic schist of the North China cliffs. With the transmitted idea and the different material the result was, most properly, unlike the work of an Indian who draws on paper or models for bronze. Still less, perhaps, could it resemble pre-Buddhistic Chinese shapes carved for another purpose to suit other patrons.

There was a second reason for the abrupt change in the look of Chinese sculpture at this time—the fact that what is left us of the new art was produced by Tatar tribes on the North who were of non-Chinese race and habit, and but newly come under the civilizing force of the Middle Kingdom in the fifth and sixth centuries.

At Yung Kang, their first capital inside the Great Wall, these converts cut deep chapels in the stone cliffs and embellished them with figures—the earliest Buddhist stone-carvings we know in China.

In a lesser niche, high up the cliff, unhurt by vandals, stands a trinity of stone cut from the mother-rock (Pl. 7). I show a part of it as perhaps the most splendid example of them all, and because, after fifteen centuries, even we cannot fail to grasp something of the real meaning of the tangible symbol. No need there to copy flesh and skin surfaces or to divert our attention by admirable human anatomy. The thing is stone. The idea is God. Such facts as the presence of head and body and feet-shapes serve so far as to make the symbol comprehended by man. But beyond fulfilling that need they must have a minimum of likeness to nature, for perfect stone-cutting in the proper manner of chisel on rock to make a symbol has no relation to familiar flesh.

In my museum the commonest and most disheartening remark about any piece of sculpture that I overhear is: "That statue was made before they understood anatomy." It is, rather, the sober truth to say that the human external shape was so well comprehended that it could be abstracted and its essentials rearranged to be useful, in formal almost geometrical shape, proper to stone.

I must confess that I am devoted to this figure above all others of its time

bottom, and, just as I snapped this picture, the sand-covered rafters caved in and let me down with a crash among a family of surprised pigs.

With the difference of material, this Buddhist bronze of the same period is as like the stone as may be (Pls. 8 and 9). Here outward shapes made for the same purposes but of different stuffs may properly be compared and the shifting style of the generation be caught.

But in China the later disasters to the Faith threw Buddhist bronzes in the melting-pot. At various periods emperors decreed that coin should be made from them, and our loss is incalculable. In our search for big bronzes we must cross the narrow seas to the islands of Japan where Buddhism was carried, and where it bore with it all the arts and crafts to illustrate and give point to its beneficent doctrine. There, for three or four generations, Chinese and China-trained Koreans made the bronze images, while native Japanese apprentices worked beside them till they, too, should become masters.

In the great bronze trinity at Horyuji monastery at the ancient Japanese capital of Nara you see the work of these first casters, which was dedicated in the year A.D. 623 (Pl. 10).

There is no rock in these volcanic islands fit for the chisel and, during this short transition period, bronze was cast in shapes that prove the stone-cutters' training from the China trade routes, rather than a true comprehension of modelling for bronze. But this was a misapprehension that was soon out-grown, as we shall see.

Without good stone for sculpture the Japanese and their foreign teachers turned to the noble conifers of their groves, and there again—surpassingly lovely as their symbolic figures were—the manner of them was at first the manner of stone. This statue, too, stands at Nara, where it was vowed fourteen centuries ago (Pl. 11). Mallet and chisel made it from the log.

But at the very same time the genius of the islanders, or perhaps the genius that lives within the wood, began ever so slightly to show itself. Men comprehended what the grain of a tree demands. Steel knives of a quality superior to those made in China were at the same time invented. Craftsmen cast aside the short choppy mallet-strokes of the stone cutter that have, from the beginning down to today, hampered Chinese wood-carving. The Japanese became true carvers and ran their keen knives along the consenting grain of cypress, and smoothly, more reluctantly, across it. Immediately the whittler's swoop and curve appeared, and long log proportions marked the lesser details of design. Vertical as tree trunks, these close-coupled statues still recall the timber from which they were conceived.

So far as was humanly possible the intellectual vision of the symbol

remained what it had been in China. But wood was here substituted for stone and shapes and outlines changed to conform with it.

In London you will all be familiar with the amazingly true and spirited copy of an original I show here. Your edition in the British Museum was carved for Laurence Binyon by my friend Mr. Niiro in Japan out of a huge camphor tree fetched from the far southern province of Satsuma—a prince's gift, hauled through the streets of modern Nara from the train-sheds by six great bulls to the carvers' workshop in the temple close. Purification and prayer were not enough to make Niiro's first attempts a success. The modern carver's tools could not be adapted to perfect that ancient, yet living, symbol. But when the bulls had tugged the second log to the temple yard, the task was begun anew to be finished with knives made after the eighth-century originals that are still preserved in the treasure-house a hundred yards to the north.

For if there is magic in the craftsman's sense of the wood-grain, so, too, the chisels and the knives that he has evolved to work it have their emphatic say in the kind of surfaces that are the result.

Precisely how little humanity and how much of the shape of man's formal geometrical image went into this symbol it is impossible to fathom. But by the simple device of showing merely this detail of the feet and that gorgeous sweep of plank that is the scarf-end of a god, one may tell that perfect wood-cutting, not perfect flesh or textile, was the carver's goal (Pl. 12).

For my own sake perhaps rather than yours I should like to step for a moment out of this orderly and chronological list of monuments. It should encourage me to find our formal image of the wood-carver imposed on his material with some different emphasis and in some other age. It is necessary to correct a habit of mind too apt to run a theory to the ground and become solemnly didactic. For it is my strong belief that the formal image, almost geometrically conceived, is man's most important contribution when he makes things out of raw material. And I am convinced that a successful symbol cannot be carved or modelled in tangible material unless this geometrical quality transcends the naturalistic. Too close a copy of nature is a real bar to symbolism.

But here, in the same technique of the wood-carver, is another foot much more naturalistically rendered and yet quite as great and successful a work of art (Pl. 13). This will serve to demonstrate two things of great significance in our approach to Oriental sculpture. The first thing is that no man can venture to measure the precise point where the abstract formal idea is disturbed or obliterated by naturalism. For different ages and tastes differ in this matter as in others. The second thing this comparison shows is that, with

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the difference of purpose, the difference of the thing to be symbolized, there may be less or more of the formal element and consequently more or less naturalism.

My first picture was the foot of a wooden image of one of the high and remote Buddhist deities. An almost geometrical pedestal-foot, recognizable but in no sense human. Good wood-cutting, you say, and handsome shape, but uncommonly bad anatomy. But the second is the foot of a wooden image of a warrior king that guards the high altar.

He is, of course, conceived to be more of an abstraction than a portrait, but is the symbol of one comparatively simple and human impulse—protection of that holy place. He is comparable to the Greek gods, who seem never more than supermen of particularly single purpose and emphasis—love, war and the rest. They are no kin to the Universal Godhead of the Orient, nor was this guardian king whose foot I show here. This foot should be no geometric symbol; it should be exaggerated human power necessary for guarding the shrine.

After this contrast of early purpose and style with the symbolism and shape of a later age, one is perhaps the readier to conceive what, for me, is the very core and type of early wood sculpture in the Far East (Pl. 14). This, too, is to be found in Japan. But, if you hold me close to China as my subject, my excuse for fetching it in will be that no contemporary wood sculpture exists on the continent, that I haven't the heart to shut out this loveliest of all archaic carving, and that, to all intents, it is Chinese anyhow.

This has the curious magic power that no man can kneel in front of it to burn his incense and watch the black doors of its lacquer shrine unclosed and still keep his critical faculty. The photograph can be studied, but I defy you to study the original. It may be that in the snobbery said to be peculiar to citizens of a Republic, I am always unduly impressed by the fact that the Lady Abbess who kneels by my side is a niece of the Empress of Japan. It may be that the gracious housewifery of the ladies of the nunnery, keeping their simple court in that village among the rice-fields, touches my heart unduly. Whatever the reason, this beloved shape and symbol shall be forever sacred from my prying logic.

Now to find the inwardness of this next period in Far Eastern sculpture—that of the late seventh and early eighth century—one must still go to the islands of Japan. Few Chinese bronzes or stone carvings of beauty and significance and no wood statues seem to have escaped destruction on the continent.

For bronze I have chosen this little figure, one of a triad set up before a bronze screen in low relief and each member supported on a springing lotus that grows up from the rippling surface of a bronze pool (Pl. 16). This, too,

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was made under the direction of Chinese or Korean casters, and yet, for all we know, it may show some peculiar island trait, some unrecognized hint of a spirit and style that was different from that of continental Asia. At any rate, no bit of the first copyists' stone manner is left in those gently modelled curves which are so strong.

Nor, certainly, is there a hint of stone technique in this most beautiful of all the backgrounds of paradise (Pl. 17). East or West, in early times or late, I do not know of bronze work superior to this in modelling or casting or in conception. These are the choiring attendant angels, and they are without fleshly heaviness. Nor do the tender lotus stems bend beneath them. Their scarves are carried, looping up high and higher by the very draughts of heaven.

I have said that the three members of the trinity sit before this screen on lotuses springing free from the rippled surface of a lake that has been cast from bronze. It is an interesting exercise for the foreigner—before he sees the seventh-century lake—to try to conceive how such a symbol should look in bronze. How naturalistic can this metal water be? What formal image of water did that modeller impose on rigid bronze? Surely no two of us conceive alike, and no one of us could expect to reimagine the vision of the ancient craftsman.

Here, then, it is—formal with ripples made by heaven's breezes, and delicately varied in its prim pattern (Pl. 18). The summit of the bronze-caster's art.

Before leaving the islands and their bronzes look now at the massive Buddha head that was made there in Nara a bare generation later (Pl. 19.) What would we not give for a few corresponding great bronze statues of that time from the best workshops of continental China? They may have been different in superficial shape, but it is hard to conceive them more glorious.

But in the rock-cut chapels of Lung Men in China, where once two thousand Buddhist priests sang liturgies and worked in their temple library, there are stone carvings of the great T'ang dynasty so splendid that a man, in seeing them, may actually partake of the grandeur of eighth-century China. I have slept, gone without sleep, in the very cave where this lion originally stood, scared to put my head outside for fear of the bandits who were terrorizing the countryside (Pl. 20). All the while the torches lit up this lion with their flicker, and I felt that I was a man of little faith, but that the power of the Buddha in truth remained for such as could take advantage of it. For though we are today ignorant of the precise meaning in Buddhism of this lion cut in rock, there is reason to believe it suggests one of the texts where the Buddha is the Law of the Universe and sits majestic on the Lion Throne.

If we cannot judge its exact purpose or how the artist conceived it and the patron expected it to look, still that other essential remains plain—the

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rock shape of it. The head and thigh in formal stone-cutter's technique, and the bulk of body planted there with its head turned to regard the world.

It is hard to imagine any period in the history of any country more stimulating than the history of China from the beginning of the seventh to the end of the ninth century. Even what is going on there today, dramatic though it is, lacks the interest that centres about really great personalities. But perhaps the romantic appeal in our studies of those centuries lies about the fact that China was truly then the "Middle Kingdom"—the centre of the world.

Mohamed, Alfred, the Sassanid Kings, Charlemagne, Roland and Harun al Rashid all mean more to us than their contemporaries the T'angs. But to have been an educated Chinese in the capital was to have known something of all those things, to have seen the Persian Embassy go by on its way to court and to have bought rugs and shaggy ponies at the Turkoman bazaar, or stuffs and spices from Arab merchants.

At home the Chinaman of that day was in an almost Elizabethan atmosphere of literature and of military prowess. His arms were unconquered and the letters of his period have not been equalled in China during the twelve hundred years that followed. He rejoiced in music and appreciated, as did the scholars of Europe during the Renaissance, the need for study of the ancients.

Now in this short hour there is no time to recount Chinese history, which can be looked up in the books written down by scholars. But to speak of the Middle Kingdom in the great times of the T'ang Dynasty and to leave out all mention of Tai Tsung the Conqueror is sheer impossibility. He was king-maker and empire-builder. By a bold stroke of combined force and statecraft he secured the title of Emperor for his father and then set about making it secure. Before many months he had captured the last of the Chinese cities that held out against him. Then came the great confederacy of Turkoman tribes, whom he sent scattering back to their steppes and deserts till he should deal with them more completely.

Hardly was this done when the Tatars of the north bore down on him and he rode out, like the Black Prince, on a black stallion at the head of twenty thousand of his chivalry in black (Pl. 21). His triumphal return to his father's court is told with something like enthusiasm by the contemporary historian, and it must have been a grand sight in that crowded city of Ch'ang An when, with his harness hacked to pieces and a shield of beaten gold on his arm, he brought the Tatar Khan in chains before the man whom he had made Emperor of China.

After the old Emperor had resigned his throne to this prince, his son, the story is a long list of answers to our questions on T'ang art and its origins

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(Pls. 22, 23, 24). Hardly a people existed who could in any way contribute to an enlightened civilization who were not called upon by T'ai Tsung the Emperor to lay tribute before him in China. From Korea to the wastes of Koko Nor, from Tibet to Tonkin he conquered and left governors and merchants. The Huns and the Turks and the Tatars kept their roads open to his tradesmen. He had an eye for horses—his stud was from Bokhara, and his mares were Arab; his Queen desired rubies—Burma sent them; or pearls, and the divers off the reefs of the Lūchūs knew it. With his armies in the field his tent was a khibitka of Turkoman felt, but of the banners planted beside it one was silk from the Punjab and the other—the gory tail of a cow—showed him Khan of Tatory.

Ambassies from far lands spent months at the capital studying T'ai Tsung's laws and his military system. Within the Palace gates was built a huge library of one hundred thousand volumes, where the six most famous literati of the realm wrote and read and studied. Here each day the Emperor would come to work out a problem of chess with one or talk over a disputed passage in the Confucian analects with another. In this library the maps were spread out as he planned a campaign, and here he would interview an Arab merchant who came carrying reports of his armies in the Persian Gulf.

Near the borders of Shensi Province may be seen today a great stone tablet bearing a cross and the date 781 of our era—just thirty years after the death of our great T'ai Tsung. On it are inscribed in Syriac a list of the dignitaries of the Nestorian Christian church built near that spot, and an account of the imperial reception given the "most virtuous Alopun" who came from Syria in 635, during T'ai Tsung's reign bearing Christianity. On the other side are Chinese characters which record the Emperor's sanction to the new faith and the erection of the first temple, which was served by twenty-one priests.

The chronicles tell that languages never before heard in China were common about the capital, and that one court secretary was so struck by the numbers of strange and outlandish costumes to be seen in Ch'ang An that he obtained T'ai Tsung's order that paintings should be made which should faithfully depict these scenes.

The caravanserais were crowded with outlanders, and certain inns made specialties of the different national delicacies, that the Turkoman Khan might not be without his fat-tailed sheep and the Ambassador from Sinlo might feast on puppy meat.

All this is worth dwelling on, for it explains why T'ang art, without a suggestion of slavish copying, has in it elements directly traceable to the

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colonists left by Alexander in his Græco-Bactrian kingdoms, Syrian designs and Persian, along with Byzantine elements and Moslem hints.

Of course my temptation is to take further advantage of your flattering attention and to ride my hobby farther—to fetch out my favourite sculptures from every period down the ages and to air such erudition as I may command. But to do so would be to neglect the commission you charged me with, which was "An Approach to Chinese Sculpture."

My thesis has been that, in approaching it, we should recall our own mediæval heritage as it was before the Renaissance made craftsmen a race of artists apart, filled with the pride of their great names and their wealth. When religious symbols were taken to the hearts of simple people without thought of idolatry. When patron and artist were close neighbours and part of a community with single comprehensible ideas—not wedged apart by odd theories on the subject of the virtue in accumulated wealth and the predominant value of quantity over quality. When men's judgment of sculpture, as of other man-made objects, was levelled direct at its purpose and technique, and when the vision of the artist was as familiar to everyone as was the tangible symbol of it which he made.

There, it seems to me, lies the difficult task of scholarship. It entails much hard and muscular thinking which is not in any way related to the training of the memory to endure a weight of dates and dynasties, or of the eye to detect surface differences in style.

If I have seemed to you to have lost poetry by this, or beauty, that is a shameful thing. Because, to tell the truth, it is poetry and beauty of which I have tried to speak.



FIG. 1. QILIN VASE, CHINA, CHOU DYNASTY, FIFTH
CENTURY B.C. (Caidun, Qilin Ju)

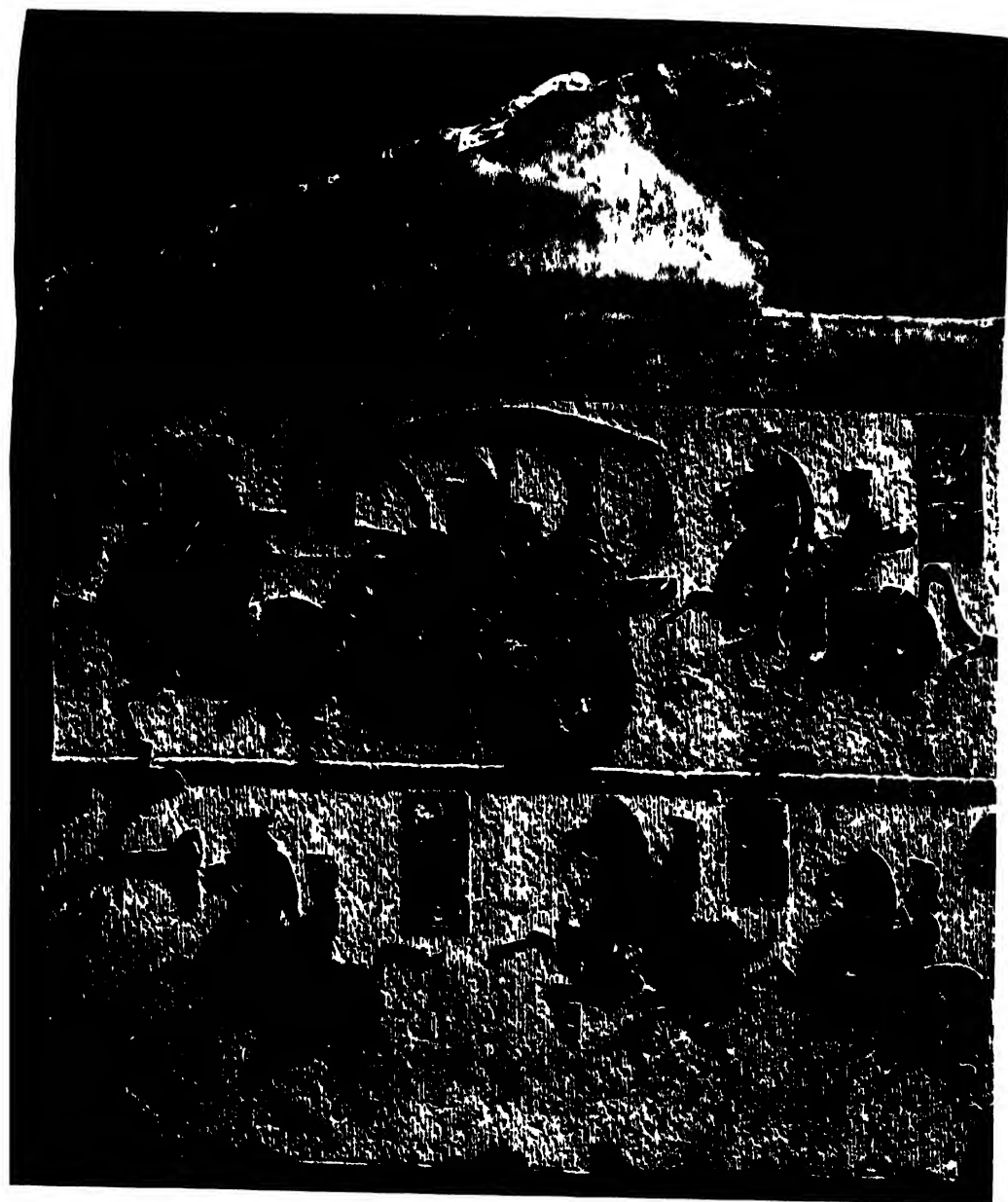


PLATE I. RELIEF ON THE WALL OF A TOMB, CHINA, HAN DYNASTY. STONE

Reproduction by the artist

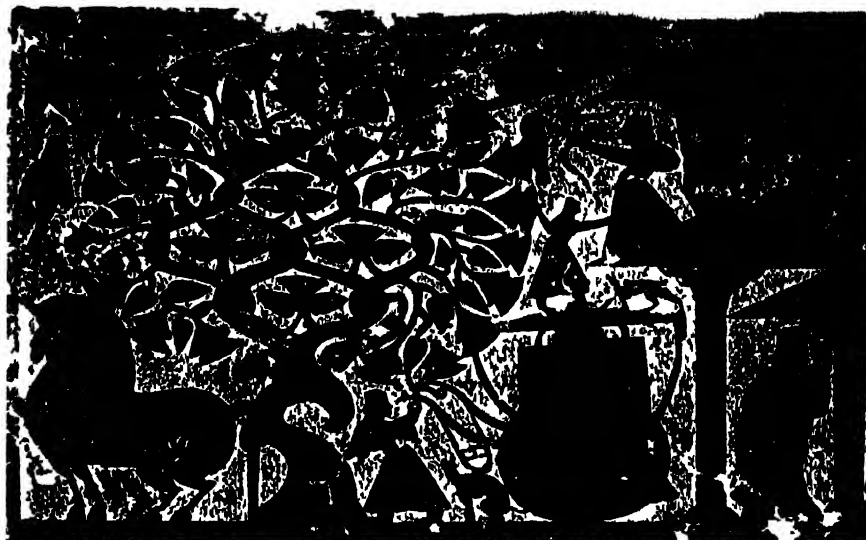


FIG. 5.—GARDEN, THERMOPYLAE, GREECE. (See Plate I, fig. 1.)
 FIG. 6.—GARDEN, THERMOPYLAE, GREECE. (See Plate I, fig. 1.)

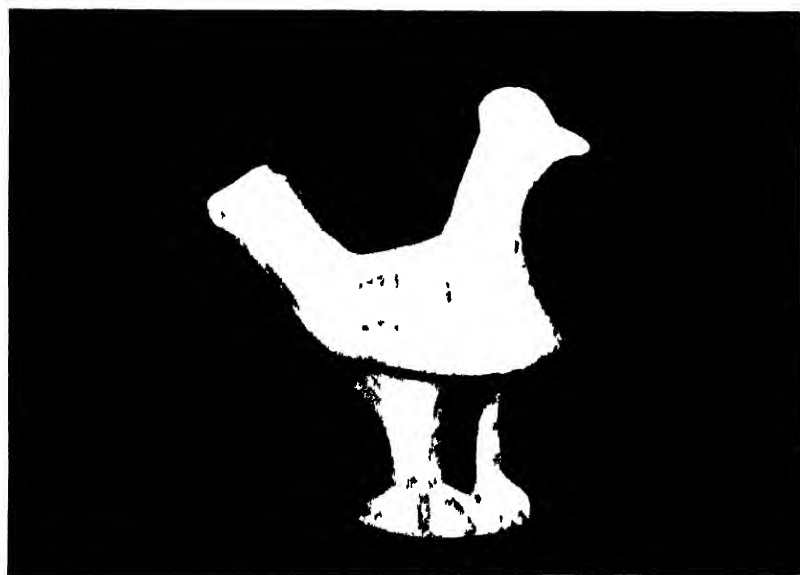


FIG. 7.—COLE, CHINA, HAN DYNASTY. (See Plate I, fig. 1.)
 (Collection of the Chinese Academy of Sciences)



FIG. 5.—BUDDHA. INDIA, GANDHARA. STONE.
Courtesy of Ethnographic Museum, Berlin



FIG. 6.—FOOTPRINT OF THE BUDDHA. FROM AMARAVATI
INDIA, LATE FIRST CENTURY B.C. STONE.
Courtesy of Museum, Madras.



BUDDHIST TRINITY (T'FAI-YUN-FAN) OF SHAN-SHIH, N. C. CHINA
NORTH OF T'AI-T'UNG TUNN - EAST SIDE



FIG. 5. MOUNTAIN CHINA. CLAY, THE
DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY
COLLECTION. IN THE
MUSEUM OF THE
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK



FIG. 6. TAIPEI, TAIWAN. CHINA, IN DYN.
SUNG. OF THE LATE LIAO PERIOD,
THE DUTCH EAST INDIA
COMPANY COLLECTION. IN THE
MUSEUM OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK



FIG. 7. LATE OF LON. FIGURE, ATTRIBUTED TO THE SUTSOK JOKU
PERIOD, TAIPEI PERIOD. THIRTEENTH CENTURY. WOOD, PAINTED
Kofukugyo, Sukunin, NARA



PLATE VII. SHAKA TRINITY. JAPAN. II. THE LATERAL FIGURES. (PLATE I)
HARUKI, NARA



FIG. 11.—KWANNON—JAPAN, SUIKO PERIOD—WOOD
Heijui Kondo Nara



FIGURE 11
REPRODUCED FROM



FIG. 11. NYOIRIN KWANNON. MADE IN JAPAN DURING THE SEVENTH CENTURY
BY CONTINENTAL WORKMEN. WOOD.
Chung-Nyu. In courtesy of Mr. Okiwa of Asakura Nara.

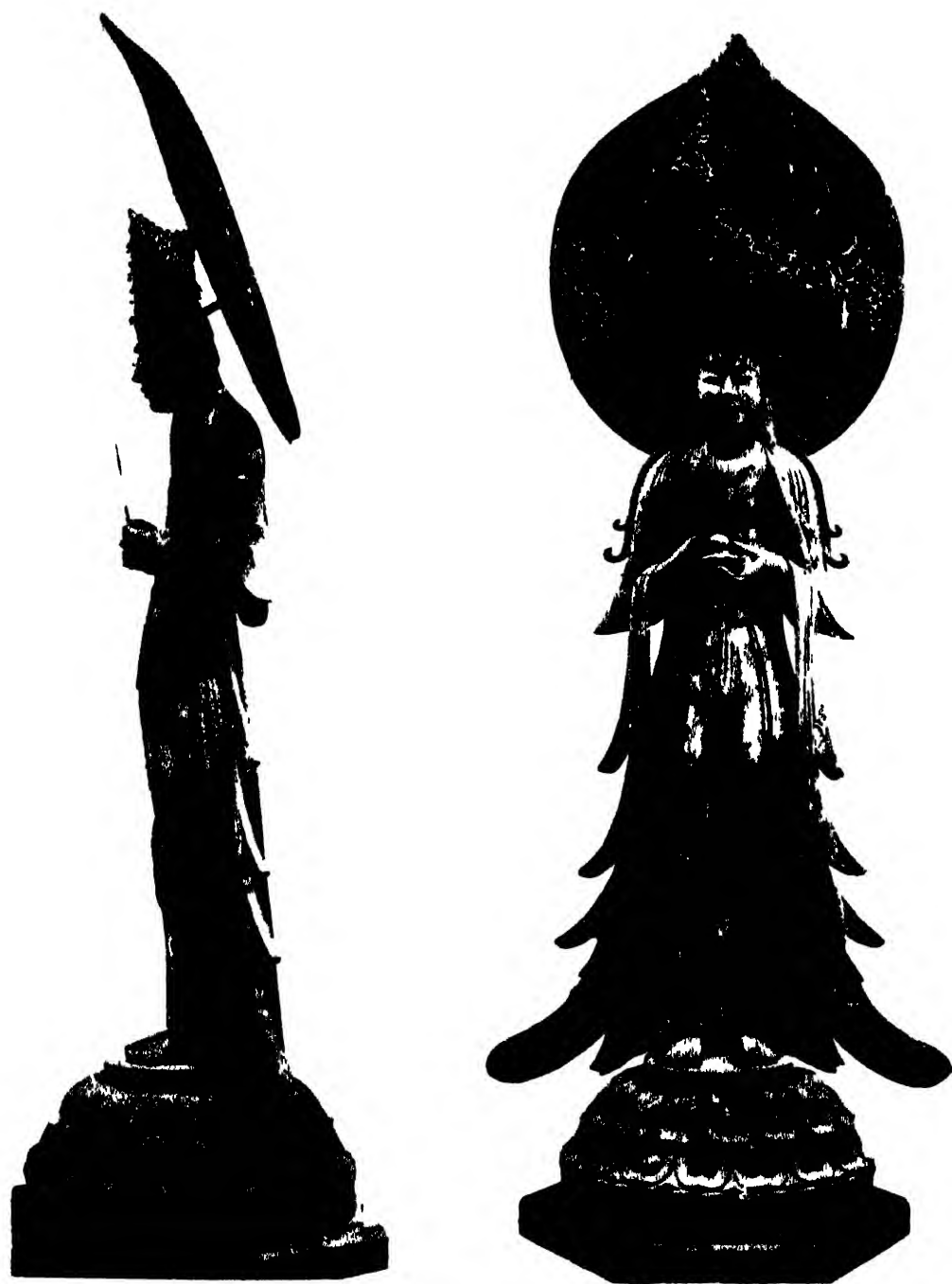


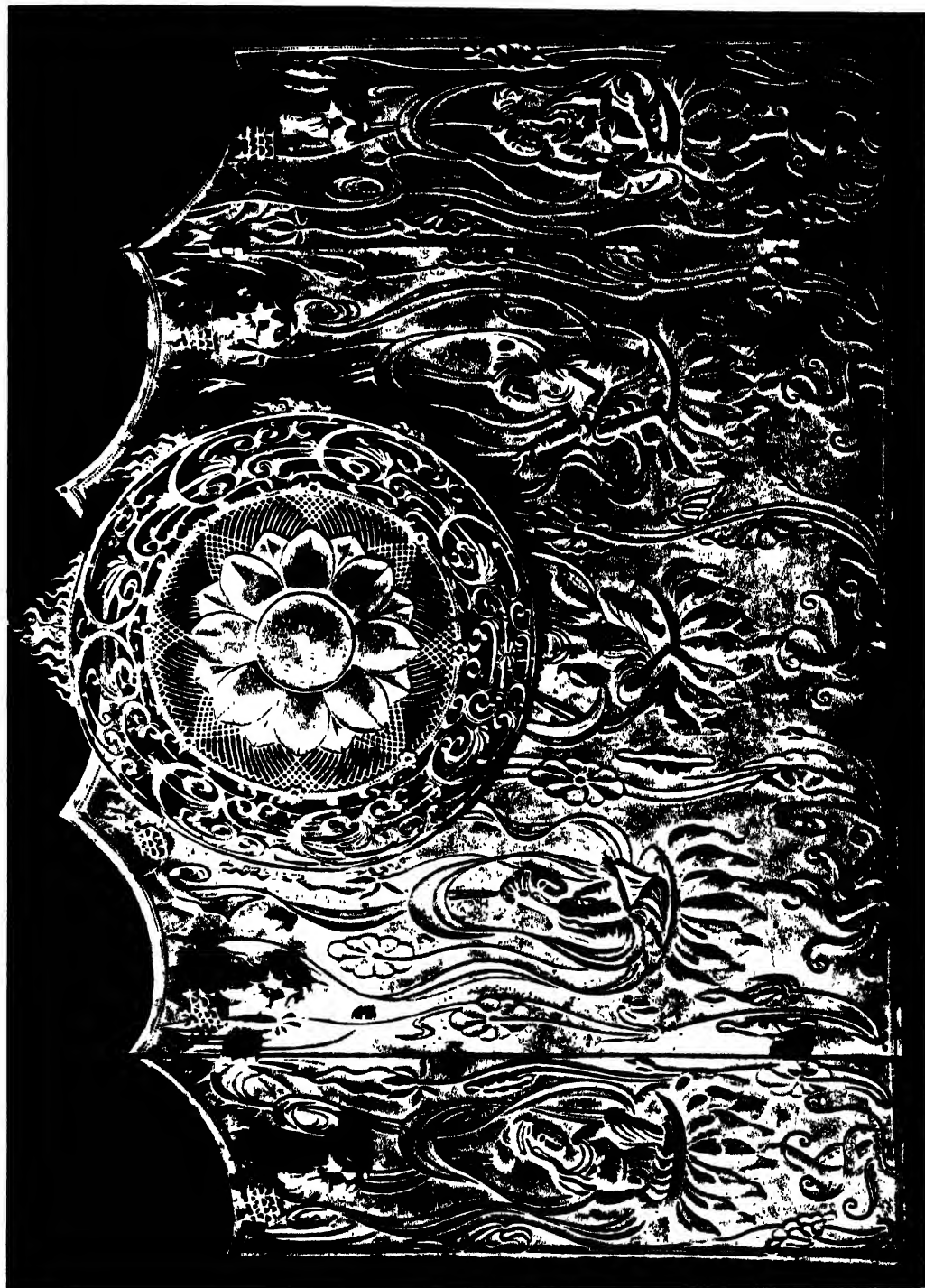
FIG. 15. TAWANNON. TARAN SUIHO PERIOD. WOOD. HEIGHT

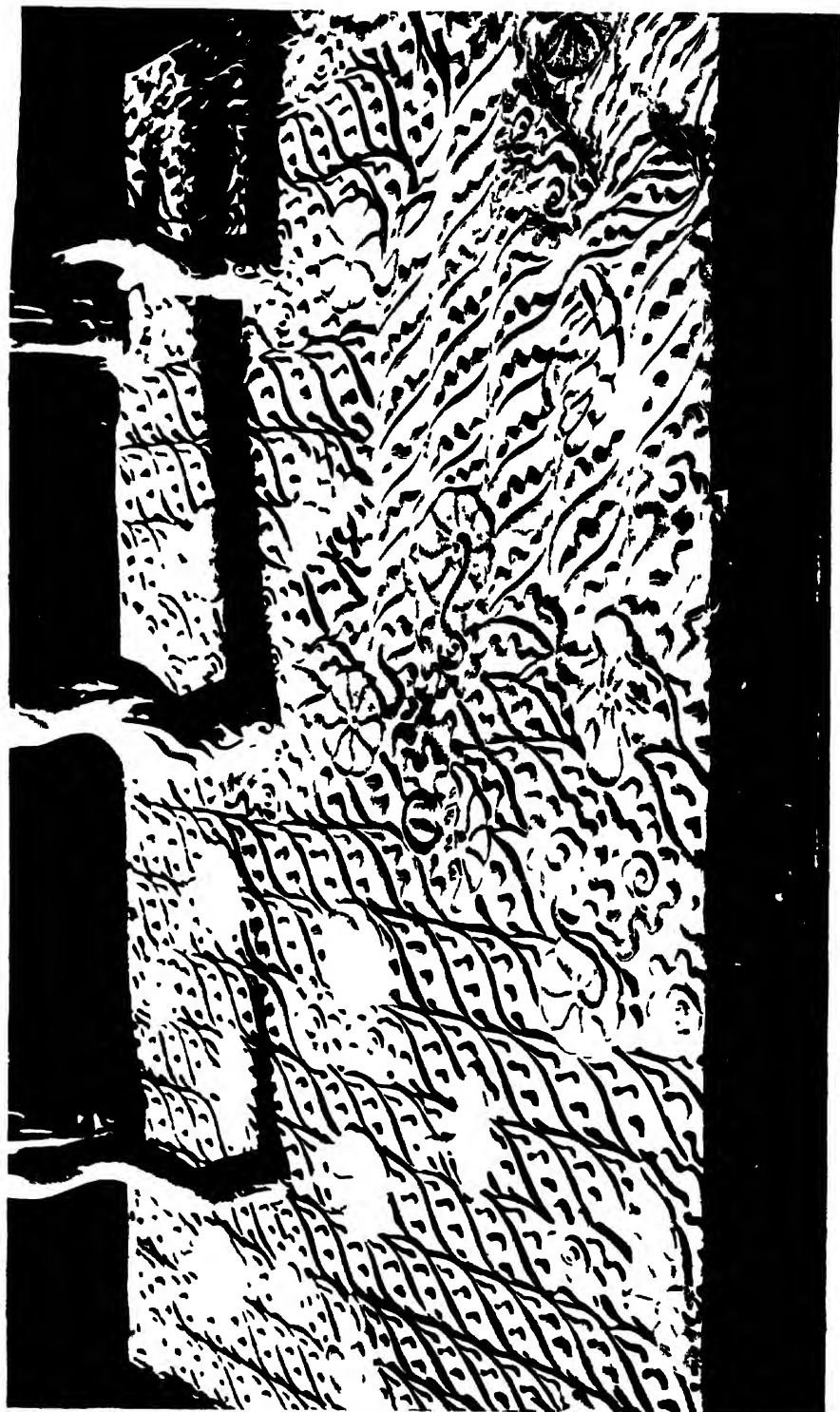
Horvuri Yumedono, Nara



10. AMIDA BUDDHA. SEATED. ONE OF THE TWENTY OF THE TA HIBANA SHRINE
JAPAN. HAKUCHO PERIOD. BRONZE. HEIGHT 47 CENTIMETERS.

Horyuji, Nara. By courtesy of Mr. Ogawa, F. A. M. E. N. S. U. A.





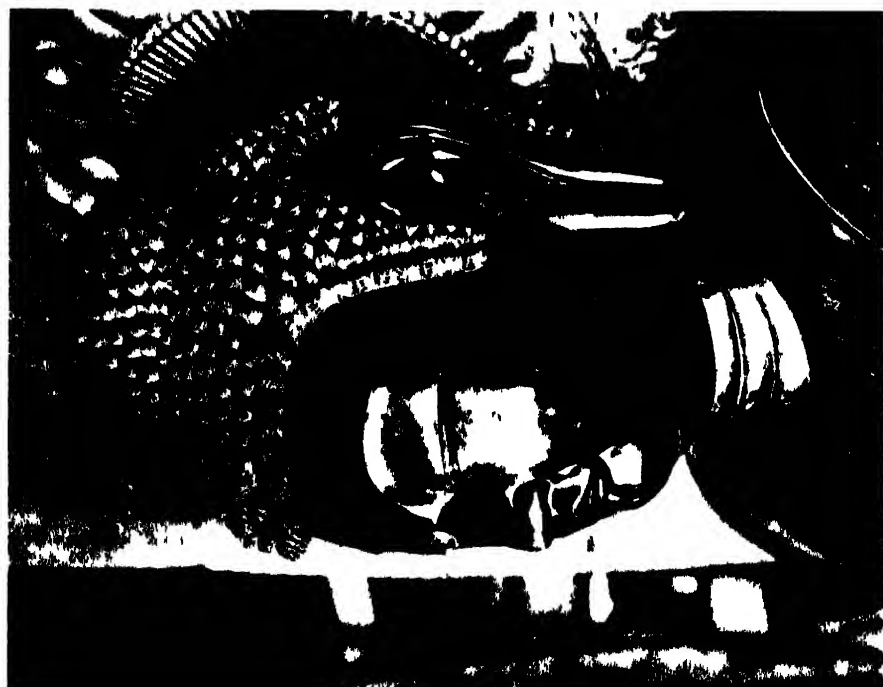




FIG. 1. THE GREAT STONE POT IN THE GARDEN OF THE TEMPLE OF THE ANcestress, FUSING



FIG. 2. THE GREAT STONE POT IN THE GARDEN OF THE TEMPLE OF THE ANcestress, FUSING



FIG. 24. BODHISATVA FROM THE CAVE CHALET OF TEN HUAN, CHINA (A.D. 450-500),
EIGHTH CENTURY. CLAY, UNPAIRED, POLYCHROME. HEIGHT 18 IN. (45.7 CM).
Collection Tokyo Museum, Cambridge



FIG. 23 — LOHAN, CHINA, TANG DYNASTY, EIGHTH, GLAZED, TERACOTTE

Collection Nelson Gallery, Kansas City, Missouri



FIG. 25 — HAKUIN, BRONZE, HAKUIN THE GREAT OF THE LOST CHINESE, EIGHTH, TERACOTTE

Kanmuri, Kyoto



FIG. 26 — DETAIL OF FIG. 25



FIG. 27 — DETAIL OF FIG. 25

Fig. 25 reproduced by courtesy of Mr. Otsuka of Asakura Nara

CHAPTER IV

THE ROYAL TOMBS OF AN-YANG

BY PROFESSOR PAUL PELLIOU

As is well known to anybody who takes an interest in the past of China, our knowledge of the ancient history of that country is still in a state of infancy. As recently as fifteen years ago, for instance, no scientific excavations had been carried out in China proper. It was only on the border of the Empire—in Chinese Turkestan, Upper Mongolia, Korea and French Indo-China—that serious archaeological work had been conducted. Scientific digging in China proper began with the Chinese Geological Survey, then headed by the late Dr. V. K. Ting and under the direction of Professor Andersson, but that work was concerned chiefly with prehistoric remains, palæolithic and neolithic. All the other finds made on the soil of China itself were chance finds, never properly controlled by any scholar, foreign or Chinese. That is why the results of some very important finds like the remarkable bronzes of Hsin-chêng, now in the K'ai-fêng Museum—some of these have been sent to the Exhibition by the Chinese Government—or even the proceeds of the great find near ancient Lo-yang from what has been called the Tombs of the Piao Bells, or of Chin-ts'un, or more accurately the Han-chün Tombs, with their remarkable relics of the second half of the first millennium B.C., have all been to a certain degree lost to scholarship, because no adequate scientific record was kept of the way in which the excavations were conducted. The finds were the results of clandestine excavation made by the local population. It is only due to the *Academia Sinica* that excavation of historical sites has been scientifically carried out in China during the last few years, and this mainly on the site of which I am going to speak—the An-yang site.

The district of An-yang is still marked on most maps under the name of

* Lecture delivered in connection with the International Exhibition of Chinese Art in the hall of the Royal Society on January 6, 1936.

I have delivered a lecture on the same subject at Harvard during the Harvard Tercentenary Conference in September, 1936, and the present publication is, to some extent, a combined text of both lectures.

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Chang-tê, the name of a former prefectorial department of the Manchu Empire. It lies on the railway between Peking and Hankow, and is still quite an important city, in the neighbourhood of which there are many ancient remains. On leaving the railway station one sees a whole field of ancient tomb sites which, in the course of the last twenty years, have been excavated in a haphazard and unscientific manner. They have yielded a large number of antiquities dating from the earliest period of Chinese history down to mediæval times. These relics, however, are of practically no value to scholarship. The greater knowledge of An-yang which we have today is due to the fact that as long as thirty-seven years ago the local farmers, while cultivating the land, came upon a certain number of fragments of ancient shells and bones inscribed with archaic characters. These passed into the hands of different Chinese scholars, and in spite of the difficulties attending the deciphering of the inscriptions, most of which are obscure and extremely hard to interpret, it was soon realized that they formed part of the oracular archives of the second Chinese Dynasty, which often goes by the name of the Yin Dynasty, though its proper name is the Shang Dynasty. In this way that dynasty, which was to us still only a name, began for the first time to be something real and alive. Ever since then our attention has been directed towards the remains of An-yang or, to be more accurate, of Hsiao-t'un, a village five miles to the north-north-west of An-yang.

As I have said, the result of the excavations made by these local people at An-yang was the gathering of a certain number of inscribed tortoise-shells and bones, and these were sold to various dealers. It was always hoped that some scientific work might be conducted on the site, but it is too late now, because the site has been completely dug over, and when I visited it a few months ago it was simply an ordinary field, without anything to be seen above ground, and I think that there is not much more to be found underneath.* Apart, however, from these numerous tortoise-shells and bones, a few examples of sculpture in ivory and in bone have also been discovered. For a full account of their finding I must refer you to the article of Professor Yetts in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* for 1933. I may say, in

* So far as I know, hardly a complete specimen of the shell of the tortoise had been found at Hsiao-t'un. But seven complete shells, discovered at Hou-chia-chuang (see *infra*) in 1934, have been published by Mr. Tung Tso-pin in 1936 in the first number of the new series *T'ien-Yeh-K'ao-Ku-Pao-Kao* of the *Academia Sinica*. Moreover, on the very morning of my Harvard lecture, Dr. Hu Shih informed me that an undisturbed deposit containing inscribed tortoise-shells and bones had been found in the spring of 1936. For safer handling the whole mass of the soil of 10 tons or more had been removed and transported *en bloc* to Nanking, where it arrived in the beginning of July. Dr. Hu Shih could not tell me the exact place of this last discovery, which promises to be of far-reaching importance, but I have learnt quite recently the surprising news that the find has been made on the supposedly exhausted Hsiao-t'un site.

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passing, that this important site of Hsiao-t'un, important not only from its geographical, but also from its cultural aspect, with its relics of the second Chinese Dynasty, has not yielded anything of importance from the artistic point of view. Nevertheless, it is fortunate that the *Academia Sinica* has taken the work of excavation in hand. After trying fresh excavations at Hsiao-t'un, which were not very fruitful, they went on to explore other sites in the neighbourhood. Of the two principal sites which they explored, one is between Hsiao-t'un and the town of An-yang, and is called Hou-kang; the other, to the north-west of Hsiao-t'un, is called Hou-chia-chuang. The important finds of recent years have come from Hou-kang, and more especially from the site of Hou-chia-chuang. At Hou-kang the Chinese officials discovered remains of palaces, temples and other buildings, and dwellings with underground caves or silos (Pl. I, Fig. 1). They found three different strata, of which the lowest was the same typologically as what is known as the prehistoric Yang-shao stratum, the painted pottery of which has already been discussed by Professor Andersson. The pottery found above it at Hou-kang is more or less akin to the black pottery of the Lung-shan type in Shantung. It is very thin and fine in texture and very brittle, so that only a few specimens of it survive. Finally, above the black pottery there was the white ceramic ware with the same decoration as on the Shang bronzes of An-yang. A number of fragments have been sent to the Exhibition by the Chinese Government, including particularly a few relics of the Shang culture. These, there can be little doubt, are datable to a period between the thirteenth and the beginning of the eleventh century B.C. Considering that our knowledge of early Chinese history has been derived mainly from books, and that it was almost impossible for us to give a precise date to objects which went back to a period earlier than the last centuries before the Christian era, this is certainly a great advance.

The third site at Hou-chia-chuang is even more interesting. I may add that there may be a fourth site at An-yang, of which nobody appears to know anything certain. In the *Illustrated London News* for March 23, 1935, Bishop White published, with illustrations, some interesting information regarding the finds from what he calls "The Tomb of the Elephant." From that tomb some remarkable bronzes, jades and other objects are supposed to have come, and in the published accounts the Tomb of the Elephant is said to be to the north-east of the village of Hsiao-t'un. When I was at An-yang I enquired about this tomb at some length, but nobody seemed to know anything about it. I wonder whether there has not been some confusion between Hou-chia-chuang and the site of the Tomb of the Elephant. If not, then this is a site of which I confess I know nothing.

However that may be, the village of Hou-chia-chuang is of particular

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interest, because a little to the north-east of it there is the site discovered and excavated by the *Academia Sinica*, which I have ventured to call the site of the Royal Tombs of An-yang. The work of excavation was carried out by the Academy during their last campaigns. Huge square pits as much as 20 yards in diameter, and with a depth of something like 50 feet, were discovered in the course of excavation. To clean up one of these pits requires the work of hundreds of labourers for a number of weeks, so vast they are (Pl. I, Figs. 2, 3, 4). Three of them have already been entirely excavated, and work on a fourth has been started and will be continued this year. These pits had been dug into the clay, the loess, and were found each with four slopes of access. This is an interesting point, because in later periods, and in practically all the Han Tombs, there is only one slope of access, which is called "The Way of the Soul." Lartigue, in studying some early tombs in the Yangtsze Valley, which date from the end of the pre-Christian era, reached the conclusion that there must have been a type with four slopes of access, one on each side of the tomb. The Royal Tombs of An-yang tend to confirm that view. One of these slopes, of course, was intended for the lowering of the coffin.

The pits were not dug in entirely the same way straight down to the bottom. Two or three yards above the floor of the tomb a bench was left round a circular pit, and it is at the level of that bench that the ceiling of the funerary chamber proper was built up with wooden boards. These boards seem to have been covered with some sort of material which has in most cases disappeared, but the clay bench still shows the remains of that covering. It was probably of leather or of matting, painted with designs in three colours—green, red and yellow. The skins or mats have entirely perished, but the colours remain and could still be seen on the clay. Owing to the difference in the hardness of the ground between the virgin soil and the earth, which was merely tamped down afterwards, the upper surface peels off easily. In this way it has been possible to recover real Shang painting—that is to say, Chinese painting of 1200 B.C.—something which we had never before dreamt of finding. Of course, it is extremely difficult to remove the remains of this painting. Some good photographs were taken of them, but, unfortunately for you, these have not inspired the generosity of the Chinese Academy towards me: the photographs were not handed over to me, but I have seen the original remains. The designs on them are similar to those of the Shang bronzes.

Under that ceiling of wooden boards was the funerary chamber itself with the coffin, and under the coffin, not only in the main tombs, but also in a number of tombs of secondary importance, there is a smaller pit. In that pit there is very often found the skeleton of a dog. The bodies were generally buried in a prone position. The surmise is that the dead body was so placed

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in order that it might be as near the nether world as possible, and that the pit was intended to facilitate its way thither, led or accompanied by a dog. In the neighbourhood of the main tomb there were a number of smaller tombs, some of them being the tombs of attendants, and others of people who had been sacrificed at the time of the burial. Many of these were beheaded, and we know of cases (I myself did not see any when I was there, because the bodies were no longer in position, though photographs of them had been taken) where people had been buried in groups of ten—that is to say, ten in each tomb, with another tomb alongside it for their ten heads.

Near the slope of access, the one by which the corpse was lowered, in one of the Royal Tombs a great many bronze arms, instruments of defence or attack, were discovered.* The day before my arrival 130 or 140 spear-heads were discovered in groups of ten, and while I was there a whole layer of weapons and helmets of the Shang Dynasty were excavated—hundreds of them, down the southern slope of access of a Royal Tomb (Pl. II, Figs. 5, 6, 7). These tombs have yielded all sorts of objects—jades, for instance, the date of which was not precisely certain, objects which if they had been offered to us in the open market we should never have believed to be of such an early period. We have therefore now to revise our notions of ancient jade. There were also found fragments of pottery of a fairly familiar type, of which we have already a certain number of specimens. The first specimens of white pottery of the Shang Dynasty had been studied some years ago by a well-known Chinese antiquarian and scholar, Mr. Lo Chen-yü. He had taken them to Japan and presented some of them to the Kyōto University, while others he sold afterwards to H.R.H. the Crown Prince of Sweden, and these are now in Stockholm. In spite of the authority which is rightly attached to Mr. Lo Chen-yü's name, we might have had some doubt as to the date of this type of white pottery, but no doubt is now possible. Many specimens of it were discovered in the course of the excavations at Hou-kang. They are found decorated with the same design as the bronzes of that period.

The Chinese archaeologists have also found specimens of carved ivory at An-yang. When the first specimens came on the market, the Japanese scientists called it stegodon, the ivory of an extinct species of animal which, as a matter of fact, did not exist in China in historical times. The matter has now become clearer. There can be no doubt that the real elephant, our elephant, existed in China in the time of the Shang Dynasty, certainly up to

* On the finds made at Hou-chia-chuang see the *Illustrated London News*, April 4, 1936, by H. J. Timperly; and *An-yang Marble Sculptures*, by O. Karlbek, in *Yin and Chow Researches*, published by the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities of Stockholm, 1935, pp. 61-69. Professor H. G. Creel has also treated of An-yang and its culture in his recent book, *The Birth of China*, London, 1936, and in some public lectures.

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the Yangtsze River, and was probably known north of the Yellow River. A large number of ivory fragments have been found in the An-yang region (Pl. III, Fig. 8). This tusk was not excavated by the *Academia Sinica*, but was found by local farmers in the course of their clandestine excavations. It was on sale in Peking when I was there, and I have been told that it is now in the possession of a Japanese collector. It is certainly the tusk of a modern type of elephant, decorated with a stylized animal design typical of the Shang Dynasty. At the thicker end there must have been a bronze fitting of some sort which has disappeared, but which has left traces of oxidation.

Many clay moulds have also come to light, though these were not found in the Royal Tombs themselves; they were found on the sites of contemporary habitations. There is no doubt that the moulds were used for the casting of bronzes, of which a great number were found at An-yang. The moulds raise a great problem. The general view is, you know, that Chinese bronzes, except for smaller pieces like spear-heads, etc., have almost always been cast by the *cire perdue* process. As a result of the recent finding of the An-yang moulds we may have to revise our views and admit that many of the larger bronzes were cast direct from moulds. Some of these bronzes are inlaid with turquoise, and that is another surprise for us. Twenty years ago an eminent archæologist maintained that turquoise was unknown in China until probably the Christian era; but since then it has been proved that bronzes with turquoise inlay existed before the beginning of the Han Dynasty—that is, in the first millennium before Christ. And now, finally, bronzes with turquoise inlay have been found at An-yang—that is to say, inlaid bronzes datable to the second millennium B.C.

There were also a great many cowries found at An-yang. Cowries are sea-shells, and these were in ancient times transported over vast distances either as a means of exchange for trade purposes or for ornaments. It is, therefore, not astonishing to find them at An-yang. An-yang, it is true, is some considerable distance from the sea, but cowries have been transported much further, even at an earlier date. They have, in fact, been found on sites of the Kuku-nor region, to which they must have been carried thousands of miles in the neolithic period simply as a means of commercial exchange.

The bronzes of An-yang are remarkable. Those which I illustrate (Pls. III, Fig. 9; IV, Figs. 10, 11; V, Figs. 12, 13) were found in the Royal Tombs themselves by the members of the *Academia Sinica*. But from the identity of design and from the general technique of their craftsmanship we can give full confidence to the opinion that some of the bronzes not found by the members of the *Academia Sinica* also come from An-yang. That is the case, for instance, with a group of three bronzes which were acquired a short time ago

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by a well-known Japanese collector, Mr. Nedzu, one of which has been lent to the Exhibition (*Catalogue*, No. 320). There are, as I say, three of them, each marked with a different character under the handle, *right*, *left* and *centre*; the one we have here is marked *left*. From the first they have been said to have come from Hou-chia-chuang, and I think we may accept that attribution.

The excavations at Hou-chia-chuang, although they are now conducted by the *Academia Sinica*, were started by the local population, and in a way we may say that the official excavations were carried out more or less in the wake of the village inhabitants, who were the first to find the sites. These local people make their excavations in a surreptitious and haphazard fashion; they dig narrow pits till they get to the bottom of a tomb, and then they begin to search for objects. All this is, of course, not scientific at all, but these people happened to hit on works of primary importance. It is not certain, though I think probable, that the Nedzu bronzes all came from one tomb, which may also be a sort of Elephant Tomb—not the “Elephant Tomb” of Bishop White, but another one at Hou-chia-chuang. At this spot, which I might call the site of the “Elephant Tomb” for another reason, we know that the inhabitants of the neighbourhood had been excavating during the last few years before the *Academia Sinica* intervened, and in a tomb which they found there they discovered many important bronzes. This tomb is surrounded by a number of smaller tombs which have since been excavated by the officials of the Academy. In several of them, instead of finding the bodies of human beings, the official excavators found bodies of all sorts of animals. It seems as though one of the Shang kings—they were really Emperors, though we call them kings—had kept a private zoo, and that the animals of this zoo were slaughtered when he died, and were buried near his body, so that his “pets” might accompany him to the next world. When I left An-yang the officials were getting out of the ground the entire body of an elephant. And so I take it that that group may be called the “Elephant Tomb,” not because it contained objects decorated with an elephant design, but because an elephant itself had been sacrificed and buried in it. It may be that the Nedzu bronzes were found in the main or Royal Tomb of that group of tombs.

When the local inhabitants tried their hands at excavating what turned out to be one of the Royal Tombs of An-yang, they were indeed not the first to do so. There are very few important tombs in China which have not been violated at one time or another. It is felt to be almost a duty for the Chinaman to spend the greater part of his inheritance in burying his parents. Whole fortunes have been spent in this way. One Han Emperor at the beginning of the Christian era buried his father in a very simple way; later

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he came to hear that people were reproaching him for being an unfilial son. He replied : " It is precisely because I am a good son that I have buried my father, the Emperor, in a very simple way. All his predecessors who had great burials in vast tumuli, in which objects of art were deposited, have had their tombs violated within a few years. As my father is buried without any valuable objects, I hope that he may rest undisturbed in his last abode."

The Chinese have always known that there was something of value to be found in their ancient tombs, and one of the Royal Tombs of An-yang shows traces of an excavation which is by no means recent and which is clearly not the small scale and clandestine digging of the local population. The whole of these tombs, as I have said, is of clay, of loess, but the degree of hardness of the clay differs. Where it is still virgin loess—that is to say, a natural deposit—it is different to where it has been dug and afterwards tamped down. One of the Royal Tombs shows signs of a very wide circular ancient excavation of great size, not at all in the manner in which excavations are conducted nowadays by the local inhabitants. The opinion of the members of the *Academia Sinica*—and it is my own opinion—is that this represents one of the results of the antiquarian zeal of a Sung Emperor of the beginning of the twelfth century, the Emperor Hui Tsung, a great collector of works of art. In the catalogue of his collection of bronzes, the *Hsüan-ho Po Ku Tu*, there are some bronzes which are said to have come from the tombs of An-yang. But these are given a wrong name; they are attributed to another king. At any rate, the Sung authorities recognized this king to be a sovereign of the Shang Dynasty. Probably some of the bronzes from An-yang were excavated from that particular tomb at the beginning of the twelfth century. There can be no doubt that the Sung Emperors were particularly keen collectors of bronzes, and so that which we find today in these previously excavated tombs is what has escaped their attention, what they did not apparently need, but what is for us a revelation—marvellous sculpture in stone of the Shang Dynasty.

Until last year it was something like a dogma to believe that there was no Chinese stone sculpture of an early date. For us, Chinese sculpture began with the engraved slabs of the Han Tombs in Shantung Province and elsewhere. As an exception, we had the Ho Ch'u-ping Tomb of the second century B.C. in Shensi Province, with horses and other animals sculptured in the round in a barbaric style, giving the impression of something foreign, as though Chinese hands had been taught the way in which the carving should be done. However, as you see (Pl. VIII, Figs. 18, 19), in the second millennium B.C. there was already stone sculpture of a very high quality. Our notions about the absence of early Chinese sculpture were somewhat

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shattered when the *Academia Sinica*, in its first campaign a few years ago, discovered the lower part of a squatting figure in marble, which is now in the Exhibition. It was a single object having a large groove at the back, showing that it was intended to be affixed to some other object, so that it could not properly be said to be a piece of independent sculpture in the round. Now in the Royal Tombs of An-yang a number of really important independent sculptures in the round have been discovered—animals of various types and human beings, and a cushion in marble which appears to have been intended to be placed in front of the throne. Of this, unfortunately, I have no photograph to show you, though I have myself seen the original. You could never have imagined that a stone sculpture of that early period could have reached such a high degree of perfection and craftsmanship.

In spite of the liberality of the members of the Academy towards me, they have felt it necessary to reserve to themselves priority of publication for many of these finds, so that I could have photographs of only a few specimens, but these are enough, I think, to show you the quality of the sculpture of that period (Pls. VI, Figs. 14, 15; VII, Figs. 16, 17; and VIII, Figs. 18, 19). I have also seen photographs of two square *ting*, each nearly 3 feet high, with four feet. One had inside it the old form of the character for *buffalo*, and on the outside the figure of a buffalo; the other had, exquisitely carved, the character for a *deer*, and on the outside the figure of a deer. Most probably these two vessels were used at sacrifices—one to hold buffalo meat, and the other deer meat. These recent discoveries are quite a new departure, so that now the Shang culture, instead of being a dead letter for us, is something tangible and alive.

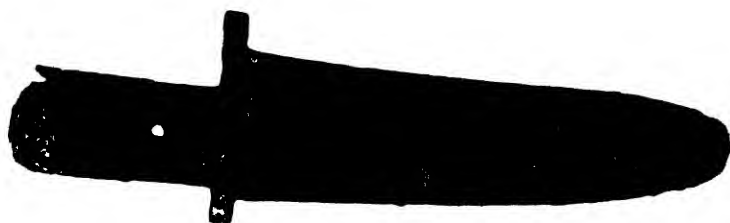
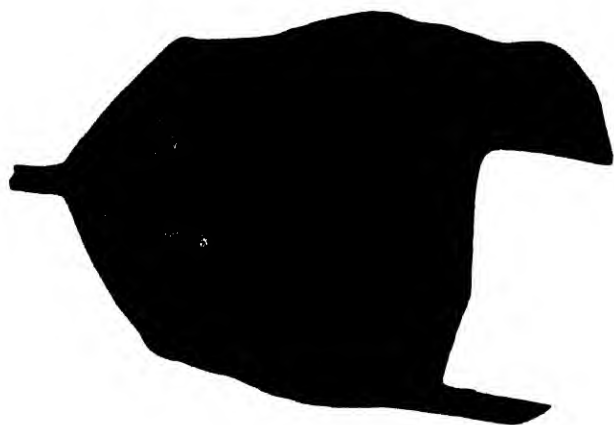
The excavations of the Royal Tombs of An-yang have given rise to a great problem. In those tombs of the thirteenth and twelfth centuries B.C. have been found bronzes and stone sculpture which reveal a perfection of technique and a power of style as high as at any period in the whole history of Chinese art. Behind them there must have been a long tradition, but a tradition of which we know absolutely nothing at present. Many conjectures, of course, can be made. It may be that foreign influences from different quarters came to be merged into that Shang culture. Nevertheless, something must have pre-existed in China, something which remains to be discovered. Our only hope is that the *Academia Sinica*, which has begun its work with such devotion and such conspicuous success, will be able to go on with it unhampered by political considerations or lack of funds.



116. 3

110. 4

(f) present Intensity of the phenomena



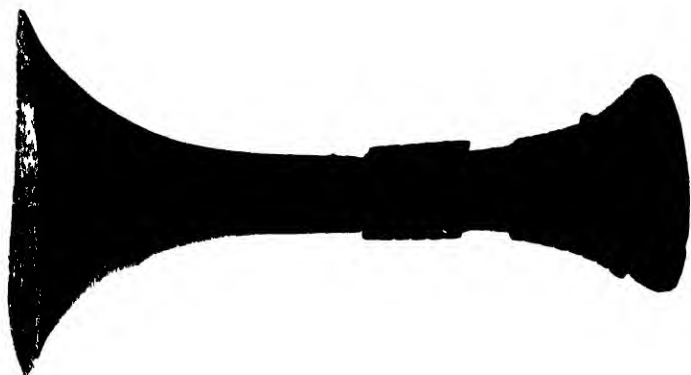


PLATE IV



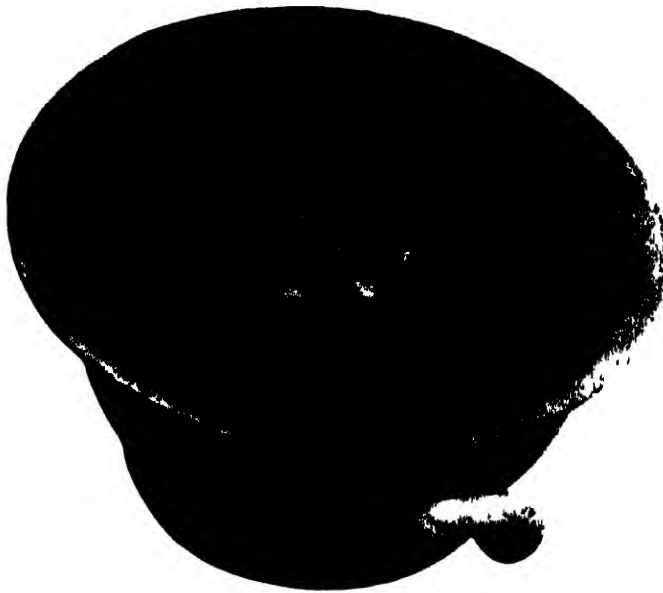


FIG. 12



FIG. 13



FIG. 14



FIG. 15



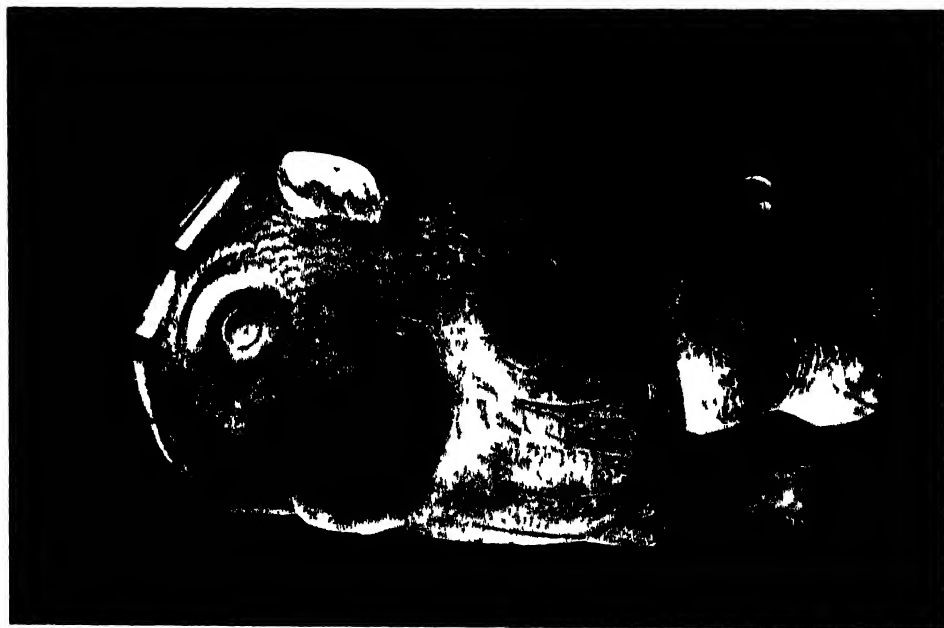
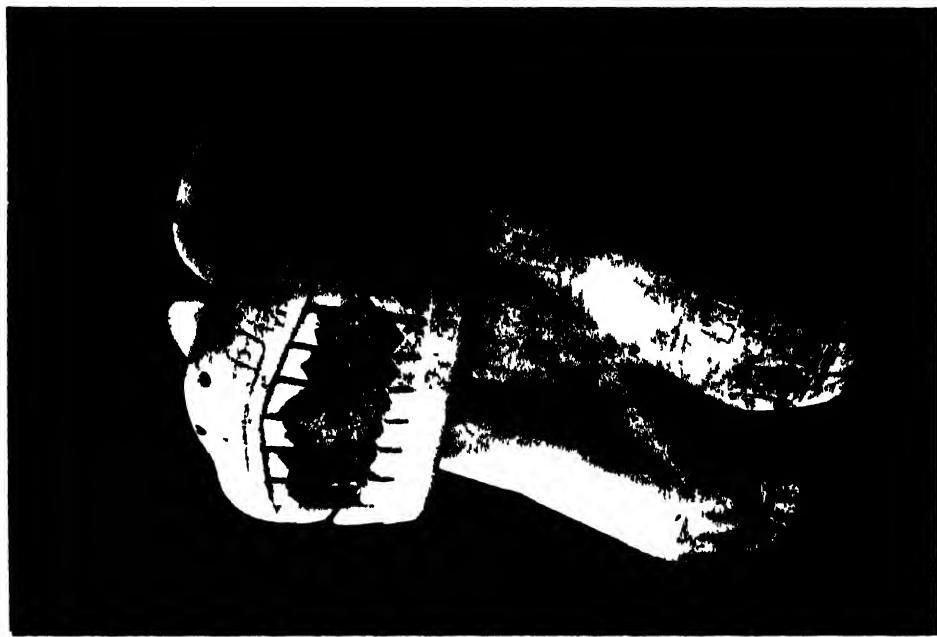
FIG. 16



FIG. 17

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PLATE VIII



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